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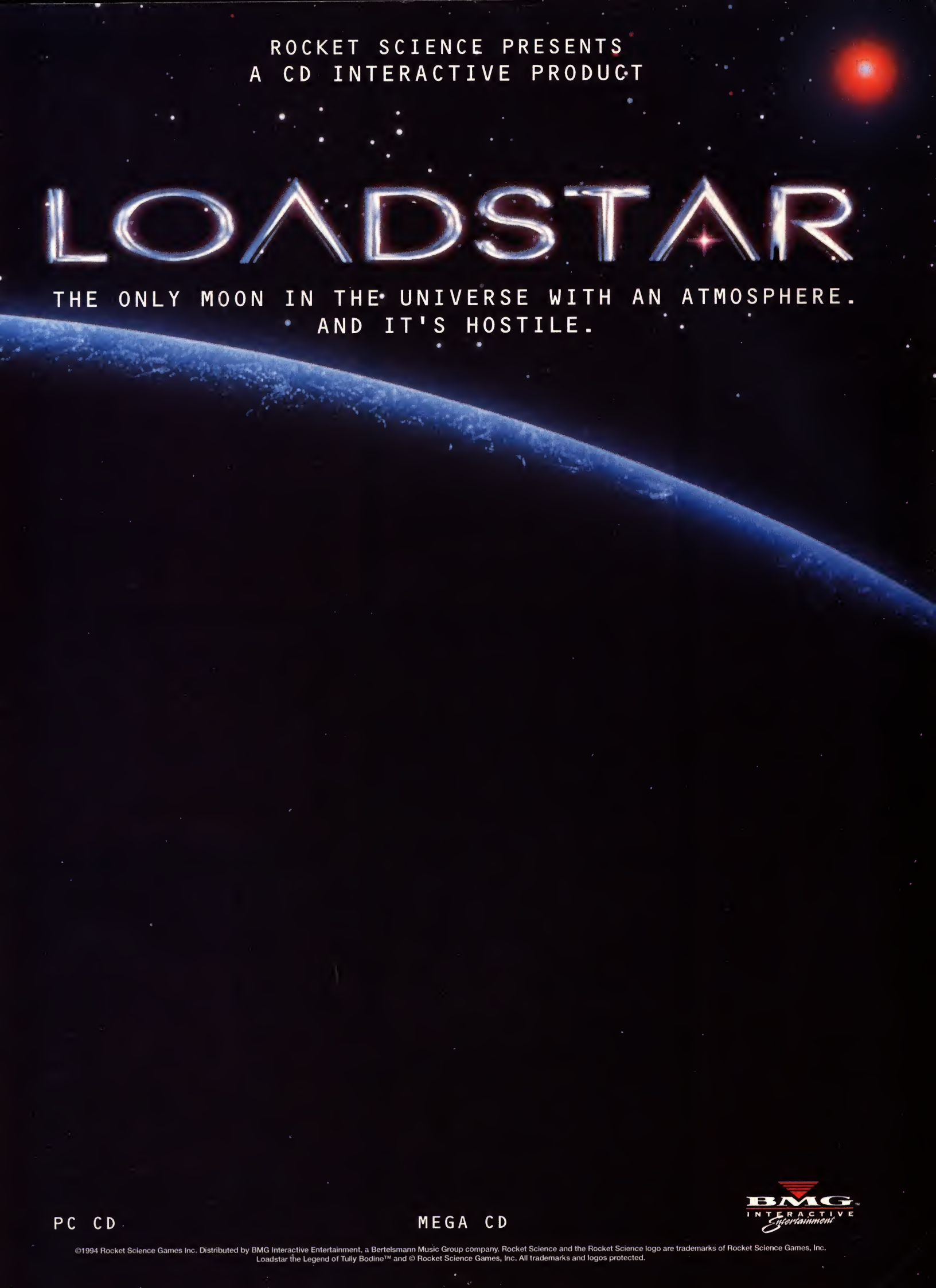

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dir.ectory

● Waddya mean it's nothing like the books? Top notch talkie-adventure *Discworld* is one of the most gagged-for games in the genre since *Monkey Island 2*. And the fact that Terry Pratchett himself had a hand in its production should be enough to shut the smart-arses up. So there.

PC ZONE

Dennis

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PC ZONE
100% GAMES
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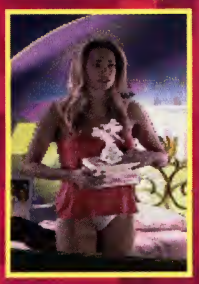

(Left) The Legend of Skullkeep is the sequel to the most respected RPG of all time.

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TEL SPEAKS OUT on games, his books and all sorts of interesting stuff in our unique, clever and strangely revolutionary E-mail interview.

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IT'S NEARLY CHRISTMAS and CD games are going to be the ones that really shift off the shelves. We bring you the low-down on the absolute classics that you really should have copies of, plus news on stuff to look forward to in 1995.

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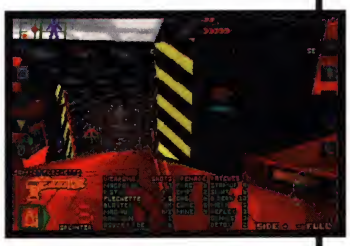
IT MAY SOUND LIKE it's about cowboys or something, but this is actually our feature about budget games. It's another one aimed at you lot who are thinking of buying games for Christmas, and it's got everything you need to know about the cheap stuff out there.



COVER DISK

HD Disk Version

Discworld

If you haven't read any of Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* books then you're probably wondering what Psygnosis' new graphic adventure is all about. Well, firstly, welcome to planet Earth, and secondly, turn to page 56 and read our exclusive review and interview with the man himself to bring yourself up to date.

Then stick our cover disk in your drive and play our fully playable demo of the adventure game of the year. The full game features voices from incredibly famous celebs such as Eric Idle, Tony Robinson and John Pertwee. It might be a simple point and click affair, but it looks set to blast every other adventure game released this year off the planet. Enjoy!

CD-ROM Version

Christmas comes but once a year and this month's cover CD-ROM has got more stuff on it than a sack full of Santas carrying very big sacks of goodies indeed. We have some mega-cool demos of the very latest CD releases and there should be something here to suit everybody's tastes.

For I've-got-a-flash-PC-and-want-to-show-it-off bods we have *Cyberwar*, sequel to the *Lawnmower Man*, and arguably the flashest release of the year in terms of presentation. *Creature Shock* is one of the best looking and most addictive CD shoot-'em-ups we have ever seen, and there's a full level here for your perusal. *Magic Carpet* is one of the most critically acclaimed (and sycophantically worshipped) games ever, but you don't have to take our word for it, you can find out for yourself with our playable demo. For adventure fans we have Roberta Williams' latest trip into fantasy land, *King's Quest 599* (sorry 7) and *Dreamweb*, an adult adventure, and so much more besides. We could go on forever but we won't because you'll just get bored. Enjoy!

(Left) The first ever review of Psygnosis' Discworld is on page 56.

Bulletin

id+RAVEN =HERETIC

QUAKE might seem like a millennium way, but the guys at id haven't exactly been resting on their laurels since the release of *Doom 2*. Far from it in fact – they've actually teamed up with the graphic masters at Raven Software to create what has been flagged as a "supernatural blast-fest".

Best described as a sort of *Doom* meets *Ultima*, *Heretic* uses an enhanced *Doom* engine that allows you to look up and down as well as fly through the sky, whilst navigating a vast landscape peppered with volcanoes and pierced with ice-covered passages.

Players will be able to use mystical artefacts to blast nasties into oblivion, and when fully equipped select one of seven different weapons ranging from a simple staff to the "awesome" Phoenix Rod, Ethereal crossbow and Gauntlets of the Necromancer. There's also going to be a special kind of power-up for each weapon that will give it new effects *and* increase the power and strength of every weapon in your arsenal.

The player environment is suitably spooksome and features raging winds, torrid river currents, lava-spewing pits and ice-covered plains. No self-respecting hostile environment would be complete without its dose of nasties and *Heretic* doesn't disappoint. Amongst others, it will feature Undead Warriors, Sabreclaws, Weredragons, Ironcliches, and Golems. *And* there's going to be true colour transparency, which means that all creatures, items and players can be "invisible" in full colour thanks to the mystical Shadowsphere.

There will, of course, be a multi-player facility just like *Doom*, that will allow you to go around slaughtering monsters together, or indulge in a little "deathmatch". *Heretic* will support up to four players via a network, or two by modem link-up and the creators maintain that it's the best thing... er, since the last thing they did (i.e. *Doom*).

Although it's not quite *Quake*, *Heretic* is obviously a toe-dipping exercise to test the water in preparation for their 'next big thing'. If this is any indication of things to come from id then a resounding cheer will no doubt echo about the land when it is released as shareware sometime this month.

Just look at these graphics, just feast your eyes on these monsters and these weapons and these environments...

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PC CD-ROM, MAC CD

IBM PC, MAC

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Bulletin

DISPATCHES

+++ ENTRAILS TO GO

Award for 'Sickest PR Stunt Ever' must surely go to Bastion, the PR company responsible for a lot of the hype behind *Doom 2* who sent jiffy bags full of entrails to journalists in an effort to promote the 'gore factor' of the long-awaited sequel to the mainstream press.

Unfortunately, the sicko stunt backfired a bit when a vegan from *The Independent* was so disgusted he took a taxi straight to the Virgin offices to complain in person, staff from the *Daily Mail* and the *Evening Standard* threatened legal action, and numerous other journo bods complained about the mess (many of the jiffy bags sprang leaks as they were delivered).

A spokesperson from Bastion did their best to make light of the matter and assured all those concerned that "we have promised to pay any dry cleaning bills." Well, that's all right then, isn't it?

+++ DARK FORCES TO GO IT ALONE IN DECEMBER

Despite all the glorious hype surrounding the *Doom* clone from LucasArts, *Dark Forces* , it seems that it's not quite going to be the spectacular everyone was made to believe it might be. For a start, the release date's been put back until April of next year, whilst rumour has it that it's not going to be multi-player/network compatible at all.

A spokesperson for the development team maintained that the nature of the plot dictates that the player is a "lone rebel" sent on a special mission to detroy the Death Star for the Alliance and that as a result a multi-player option would conflict with the storyline of the game. Pooh-hooh!

All is not lost, however. There will be a playable demo version going up on Compuserve on 1st December. Time to get on–line.

+++ ECSTATICA FLOPPY

The absolutely fab elipsoid/polygoned extravaganza from Psygnosis, *Ecstatica*, is coming out on floppy soon. The CD-ROM version, which scored a massive 93% when it was reviewed in last month's *PC Zone*, features superb character animation, speech and graphics making it one of the best CD releases of the year. The HD version, it is promised, will not be too different.

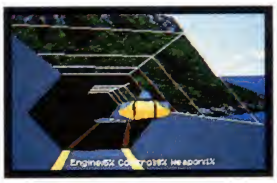
SLIPSTREAM 5000

FASTEN YOUR SEAT belts and get ready for the ride of your life. The slickest race game this side of the M25 from Gremlin Interactive is shaping up and looking rather smart.

Currently deep in the development stage, *Slipstream 5000* is a state of the art racing game that features super–fast 3D rendered, texture mapped graphics and superbly slick animation. Players will be able to race against 10 other Slipstreamers each with their own personalities and racing styles, and there will be a choice of 'race' or 'all out combat' mode. Yep, it's going to be a bit of a shoot-'em-up too. And we're not just talkin' lasers, but rockets, heat-seeking missiles and mines for when things get too dirty.

With ten different circuits and a split-screen two-player option with a 'link-up' mode for more than two players simultaneously, *Slipstream 5000* is a serious contender for racing game of moment. The bad news is it's not due for release until well into next year. Contact Gremlin on 0742 753423.

Gremlin's Slipstream is the slickest race game this side of the M25.



MAXXIMUM REALITY

THE FIRST VIRTUAL REALITY headset to go on sale in the UK is due on the shelves 'any day now' well ahead of the opposition. The CyberMaxx headset from American firm VictorMaxx will be distributed by ZCL and retail at £499 (+VAT). The unit, which has been in development for three years, plugs straight into a PC or video player to give the wearer a feeling of total immersion and a super wide field of vision.

The CyberMaxx unit is expected to come bundled with four games: *3D World Builder* from Virtech, *Ghost Train* from DCD, *System Shock* from Electronic Arts and *VR Slingshot*, a super-fast 3D flight shoot-'em-up. The unit will also support many new titles including *Descent, Stonekeep, Mech Warrior 2* (if it's ever released!), *Inferno, Magic Carpet* and, of course, *Doom*.

Both new and old titles can be easily converted with dedicated patches, and VictorMaxx are confident that once their projected worldwide sales estimate of 50 million units for 1995 is reached, developers will be falling over themselves to develop dedicated software. We shall see. Contact VictorMaxx on 081 541 4082.

Macca still 'The BEST!'

Yep, it's official. Our very own Macca recently entered a *Doom* tourny last month, played a young pretender – thrashed him and then went on to swipe a massive victory (10:2 to be precise) against a slightly older (though admittedly less skillful) pretender from Bath.

Unfortunately, the tourny sponsors refused to give him a T-shirt, but he got one anyway! If you think you can do better then come along to the Computer Shopper Show and throw down the gauntlet with the legend that is himself – there's gonna be a four-way network Deathmatch up and running too. *Doom-tastic*!

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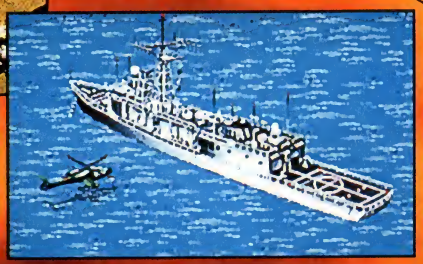

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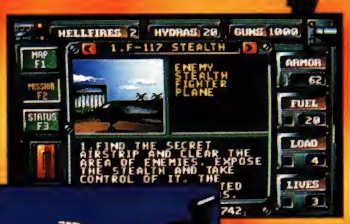

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PC STRATEGY PC ACTION PC ADVENTURE

Bulletin

DISPATCHES

+++ DOOM – THE SILICON GRAPHICS VERSION!

Yep! You thought it couldn't get any bette –, or make that, you thought they couldn't do any more with a single game! You will finally be able to say farewell to blurry bitmaps and dodgy dark bits whilst you stomp about with chainsaw in hand. Rumour has it it's going all pretty, smooth and lovely like sometime next year. Almost reason enough to sell the house, cat and dog and buy a Silicon Graphics machine.

Look out for a rainbow coloured version and a Royal House of Windsor level that features Charles, Di and Queen Mum monsters real soon!

+++ ELEVENTH HOUR NOW NEXT YEAR

The long-awaited sequel to one of the best selling CD-ROM games of all time, *The 7th Guest*, has again been put back for release until later next year.

Originally due for release in April of this year, it looks as though *Eleventh Hour* won't hit the streets until as late as March '95 in order to give the game's designers more time to get it running perfectly. It is reported, however, that the sequel will be far technically superior to *7th Guest* as and when it is finally released.

+++ TIME STANDS STILL ON PRICES

Bit strapped for Christmas and still want a PC? Time Computer Systems might have the answer. They are still doing their special 'Buy Now Pay Later' deal on their 486 DX50s which come bundled with loads of software and even *Doom*. Under the latest deal, buyers pay £130 deposit and then, six months later, £48.70 per month for the next two years. Contact Time on 0282 777111.

+++ ALL CALM AND TRANQUIL

Virgin continue to pioneer the "interactive multimedia revolution" with a new audio CD release combined with a fully playable demo of the stunning new shoot-'em-up, *Creature Shock*. The CD features nine ambient tracks from various artistes such as The Voltage Brothers, Gagarin and Cloud Horses, and really is rather good. Expect to see more where this came from. Contact Virgin on 081 960 9900.

Renegade: Battle For Jacob's Star

SSI have finally started to move away from the world of AD&D into the wild blue yonder and have come up with a space sim/shoot-'em-up blaster that's not a million miles away from *Wing Commander* or *TIE Fighter*, but then that's not so bad, is it?

It's all in SuperVGA with cinematic cut scenes to help jostle the plot along which follows the usual "hero pilot bloke (Renegade – bit of a hot head, whizzo pilot) has been sent to a distant planet to cool off. Suddenly the planet is attacked by some nasty alien types (TOGs) and your Station Commander has gone and done a runner. You must take control and guide your forces into battle until reinforcements arrive".

It's fast, it's furious, it's on one CD-ROM, it's from Electronic Arts and it's due out in December.

CD–ROM Interactive Collection VOL 1

Just bought a CD–ROM drive and want to give your CD software collection an instant boost? The *CD–ROM Interactive Collection Volume 1* from Kixx is well worth a look. The pack, which retails at just £49.99, features 16 titles on10 (yep, 10!) CDs and includes various references products (*The Animals, World Atlas Version 3.2*), sports games (*World Cup USA 94, Winter Olympics* and *Links*), arcade games (*Thunderhawk, Robocod* and *Outrun*), utilities (*Johnny Castaway Screensaver*) and a host of other creative and leisure titles. It's even got Madonna and Michael Jackson on it somewhere!

For a full list of titles and details of other Kixx releases contact Kixx on 0121 625 3311.

DOMINUS

UNLESS YOU'RE a bit of an anorak and fancy yourself as a bit of a strategist (in other words, you're the sort of person who uses the 'shuffle' feature when listening to CDs), you'll probably find most war games as appealing as dried panda phlegm. Well, those clever peeps at US Gold, being such swingers, have realised this and are about to release a stonking new fantasy strategy sim with a difference – i.e. it's fun and easy to play.

That's not to say it's a bland, simple and non-taxing, in fact quite the opposite. It's very original, compelling and, well, fun to play. As overlord of the dominion, players must battle a multitude of clans who are invading their kingdom and generally acting like a load of Millwall fans on tour in Europe (yeah – a likely story! Millwall in Europe!). In other words, raping, pillaging and generally causing havoc with the community. You must organise your resources as best you can, laying traps to defend your castle from the rabbling hordes, initiate strike attacks against unfriendly orcs, and (this is the best bit) concoct mutant monsters of your own by genetically 'mixing' them with your own troops and those you've managed to capture.

This feature, combined with the fact that it's all programmed using special real time 'fuzzy logic', features 72 unique areas, seven difficulty levels, 100 possible trap combinations and a sack full of spells, means that it's highly unlikely you'll ever play the same game twice.

It's coming out on floppy and CD-ROM very soon for around £40. Contact US Gold on 021 606 1800.

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Bulletin

From bad to Norse? Hammer of the Gods will strike a chord with intellectual RPG fans.

DISPATCHES

+++ NASCAR NOT YET

The spectacular vroomer from Papyrus, *NASCAR Racing*, will not be released until late, late '94 due to problems encountered whilst testing the game prior to duplication. The developers are confident, however, that a full working version of the game will hit the stores before Christmas, and if all goes to plan visitors to the Computer Shopper Show will be able to take a two-player networked version for a spin, courtesy of publishers Virgin.

+++ NO DOOM ON 3DO

Contrary to rumours that *Doom* is currently being converted to run on every platform ever, id have revealed there will not be a 3DO version as originally expected as they have "no faith" in the capabilities of the machine. The news will surely come as a real blow to The 3DO Company which, despite selling well in Japan, flopped when it was released in the States earlier this year.

The technically impressive unit is said to be "doing well" in the UK and Europe, however, with some exciting new releases finally putting in an appearance from EA. Plans for a 3DOBlaster plug-in card from Creative Labs are still to go ahead, although exact details of whether the package will be bundled with a CD-ROM drive and with what software are still as yet unclear.

+++ AZTECH QUAD-SPEED DRIVE

Aztech has announced the CDA 468–01I, a new IDE–based quad-speed CD-ROM drive. Exceeding MPCII requirements, the drive delivers a data transfer rate of 600Kbps and an average access time of 235ms, allowing faster retrieval of information.

Featuring a buffer size of 256K, the drive cache stores more data before transferring to the CPU, resulting in much lower CPU utilisation (i.e. it takes some stress off your main CPU).

The drive is also fully multi-session Kodak Photo CD compatible and can be used to play normal audio CDs controlled through a CD quick play button on the front panel so you don't need to load up any software. Price is yet to be confirmed, though we understand it's due for release early next year. Contact Aztech on 0734 814121.

BRAVE NEW WORLD

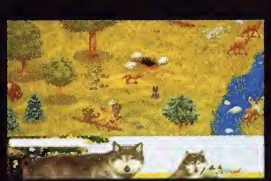
RPG FANS can look forward to two new releases from New World Computing. The first, *Hammer Of The Gods* , puts the player in the shoes (or should that be boots?) of a young Viking hero, striving to become the right hand man of Odin, ruler of the Norse Gods. To achieve such status, the player must complete a range of complex and varied tasks based on Nordic mythology, so it's really a case of Inspector Norse rather than a Viking beat-'em-up. Up to four players can play, it's all in SuperVGA and features a very handy menu system.

The second, *World Of Xeen,* is part of the popular *Might & Magic* series and attempts to combine the best elements of strategy games with the RPG genre. Again, it's all in SuperVGA, features over 200 walking/talking characters, an easy to use mouse-driven interface and cinematic game sequences. Both are due out very soon for around £40. Contact US Gold on 021 606 1800.

WOLVES NIL: LAUGHS A–PLENTY

Have they gone mad?" You might well ask when you see the latest offering from Sanctuary Woods. We've had *SimCity, SimAnt, SimFarm*, but a wolf simulation? Cocking your leg up a tree? Hunting poor little fluffy creatures with big, round, scared eyes? Finding a mate? Running after sticks? Going huff and puff and blowing all the fluff out of your navel?

But seriously(?) *Wolf* is "an innovative cross between role-playing and simulation" that will have you doing all of the above and more. You can choose to be a timber, arctic or plains wolf and experience first hand (or first paw) the animal's environment and lifestyle. The longer you manage to survive, the stronger, smarter and faster your wolf becomes. You start off as a pup and, as you gain more experience, you get to challenge the chief wolf and become leader of the pack. You then have to lead your company and generally take charge of your furry friends, keeping them out of harm's way whilst making sure there's always plenty of food for the youngsters.



Sounds like a bit of a howl, doesn't it? Fur details contact US Gold on 021 606 1800.

RADIO ACTIVE

What a clever title – ho hum! No, it's not about deep sea fishing in the North Sea, nor sheep farming in Chernobyl for that matter – it's a music quiz (gettit). Based on a popular US TV show, players must identify various clips of music and video from randomly selected decades and answer various questions on music trivia (basically Pop Quiz on CD-ROM – they can't say that, but we can – ha!). It's for up to four players, it's fun (allegedly) and it's on CD-ROM. But does it know what was on the b-side of the Bonzo's *Urban Spaceman* single? Probably not. Answers on a postcard please. Contact US Gold on 021 606 1800.

What tune did Chernobyl sheep farmers hum when the reactor sprang a leak?

PREMIER MANAGER 3

This game is not a matter of life & death...

...it's much more important than that...

Premier Manager 3 is the definitive football management game, and the climax to the most successful management simulation series in football history.

A whole range of exciting **new features** have been added to the immensely popular Premier Manager interface, which now includes:
● The European transfer market. ● New match display feature and user definable tactics. ● All the latest up-to-date squad listings. ● All the key European and English competitions. ● Three modes of in-match animation to help in game decision making. ● New 'Player Loan' facility. ● Assistant manager appointment. ● Direct instructions to squad members. ● Up to four independent scouts. ● Squad strengthening loans. ● Full graphic ground improvements. ● Comprehensive match reports. ● Detailed results and player/manager information service. ● Manager of the month award. ● Mid-season dismissal.

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Premier Manager 3 is the only game exclusively compatible with the new Premier Multi-Edit System™ the complete information editor ***AVAILABLE SOON***

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Available on: • Amiga 1200, 500/600 • PC 3.5" disk • PC CD-ROM

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Gremlin

Bulletin

THE CHRISTMAS COMPUTER SHOPPER SHOW

The Christmas Computer Shopper Show is *the* PC event of the year. Miss it and you might as well move to North Wales, bury your head in the sand and call yourself Shadwell. This year there are more stands, more games to play and more bargains to be had, and every day in the *Leisure Zone* your very own *PC Zone* will be running special competitions, demonstrations and multi-player tournaments. You'll also be able to get a sneak preview of the latest releases from all of the big names in software and try out the latest games before you buy. No PC user can afford to miss it!

Who's there, whatta they got?

Doom 2 (Virgin)

The sequel of last year's game of the year, *Doom 2*, was greeted with a resounding thumbs up across the land when it was released on Doomsday 10th October. Proving that the best *can* get better, developer iD has made it faster, with even nastier nasties and a devastating new weapon. Seasoned pros reckon it's even better for a spot of "Deathmatch" than the original, but you don't have to believe what they say – try it out on a specially prepared four-way network for yourself.

You'll also be able throw down the gauntlet with our very own *Doom* legend, David 'Macca – The Best' – McCandless, in a special head-to-head showdown, and enter the heats for our UK *Doom* Championship while you're at it.

NASCAR Racing (Virgin)

Only six people in the world were failed to be impressed by classic racing sim *IndyCar*, and they all lived underground in a nuclear bunker near the South Pole. Rumour has it, however, that after hearing about *NASCAR Racing* the family is planning to emigrate to London's Olympia so that they can be amongst the first people in the UK to play *NASCAR* as it should be played – i.e. head to head in a specially built Thrustmaster unit. Get there early, but don't expect to be first in the queue. There'll be at least six people in front of you!

Inferno (Ocean)

The long-awaited fly-about, shoot-'em-up, jaw-dropping extravaganza from DID was released to the computer press equivalent of a standing ovation when it was premiered at the ECTS a couple of months ago. Featuring the best in graphics, animation and gameplay, as well as a storming sound track from Alien Sex Fiend, this game comes highly recommended in every department. If you get the chance to play it using a VR helmet, grab it with both hands – it won't get much better than this for eons.

Under A Killing Moon (US Gold)

If anyone needs a demonstration of what the CD-ROM interactive movie is all about, they need look no further than *UAKM* from US Gold. In development for almost two years, and coming on four (count 'em) CDs, it's been described as the first *and* last word in CD-ROM entertainment, putting the "interactive" well and truly back into the phrase "interactive movie". Mould breaking!

World Cup Golf (US Gold)

If you thought that golf games on the PC had reached their peak with *Links* and the like, then a quick shufty at *World Cup Golf* from US Gold will soon have your jaw on the floor. Boasting new highs in terms of graphics and gameplay, this is the most detailed and accurate golf sim ever developed. With 15 alternative championship formats to play, breath-taking animated aerial shots of each hole, practice facilities and precise shot control (17 clubs, fade/draw, top spin and shot power) it's gonna take some beating.

Cyberwar (SCI)

Ever since the original *Lawnmower Man* was released in April earlier this year, fans of the spectacular graphic/animation fest have been scratching at SCI's door pining for a sequel. Well, it's here, it's on three CDs (plus an extra audio CD featuring music from legendary guitarist Steve Hillage – the guy who did the music for the first *Lawnmower Man* game), features mind-blowing Silicon Graphics graphics (how does 630,000 polygons per second sound?),

and a complex blend of arcade and puzzle segments, making it one of the most technically and visually impressive games ever developed for the PC. Play it and prepare to be amazed.

Alone In The Dark 2 CD (Infogrames)

When the original *AITD* walkabout adventure was released way back in November 1992 it instantly shot to the top of the PC charts. Now, two years on and several *Alone* clones later, *AITD* 2 has just received the enhanced treatment, making it faster, smoother and altogether more playable, whilst *Alone 3*, due for release early next year, promises to be better still, with full speech and more polygons than you can shake a mouse at.

Warplanes 1975-94 (Maris)

There have been a number of interactive books since the emergence of CD-ROM as a viable PC storage and retrieval medium, though few come up to the standards set by *Warplanes* from Maris. Jam-packed with information, there are stills and video on 275 types of gun, missiles and bombs, and 531 entries for aircraft in mlitary use from 1974 to the present day. Everything you could think of is there, in glorious hi-res or FMV with suitable soundtrack. This is what CD-ROM is all about: it's detailed, accurate and a joy to use. Check it out.

And...?

As we go to press there are still a number of other software houses queuing up to book space or to confirm whether we can fit 'em in. Still to be confirmed are: Interplay (*Descent/Cyberia/Dungeon Master 2*), Electronic Arts (*Magic Carpet/Little Big Adventure/Wing Commander 3*) and Psygnosis (*Discworld/Ecstatica/Novastorm*).

TYPICAL

YOU WAIT

ALL YEAR

FOR A

QUALITY

COMPILATION

Bulletin

DISPATCHES

+++ GRAVIS WINNER

The winner of our *Gravis* goodie compo held a couple of issues back was Mr Ian Noble of Bristol – and here's a picture of him so next time you're in Bristol and you see him down the pub you can say "Oi! Ian... got any spare joysticks?" and then get laughed out of the pub for being a saddo social outcast.

+++ SIMANT CD-ROM

The strangest sim of them all is back on CD-ROM. Featuring over 20 minutes of FMV of ants (of course), the enhanced version also includes SimAntha, a hip hostess who uses her hilarious antics to entertain and guide the player throughout the game. It's all in SuperVGA with speech and appropriate ant noises, and it's due out ready for Christmas. Contact Interplay on 0235 821666.

+++ *DOOM 2* KNOCKED OFF TOP SPOT SHOCK

The most hyped PC release of the year, *Doom2*, has been knocked off the number one spot after just two weeks by *SimCity 2000* from Maxis. Although the game initially sold well, largely due to the massive PR campaign surrounding the release, the game, which retails at £50 (HD version) has performed much worse than expected.

Three original shareware versions of *Doom* are still riding high in the budget charts, however, making *Doom* one of the best selling PC games of all time.

FOOTBALL CRAZY

THERE SEEMS to be a bit of a battle going on as far as footie management sims are concerned, with *Championship Manager 2*, *On The Ball* (enhanced CD-ROM version) and *Premier Manager 3* slogging it out for the top spot.

Championship Manager 2 promises to remain close to the original formula that made *CM93* such a success with the addition of hi-res graphics, a Scottish League, international management opportunities and an enhanced player exchange system.

Premier Manager 3 again offers more of the same along with some new features, including the option to appoint an Assistant Manager to help with the day-to-day running of the club, a new transfer system and completely new options for setting up training and tactics. Gremlin have also souped up the interface so that you can actually watch a representation of the game on screen enabling you to assess the strengths and weaknesses of your tactics and players. As you might expect, they've also improved the sound and graphics.

As for *On The Ball* from Ascon, well, they've basically kept the style and structure of the original floppy game intact and focused on improving the sound and graphics. As a result, the new enhanced version features animated sequences and a new intro, whilst the match highlights themselves are commentated on by Mr. Football himself, John Motson– "Quite remarkable!"

Then, of course, there's Anco's *Fantasy Manger* based on the TV show hosted by David 'Blubbadeebub' Baddiel and Frank 'Funny bloke' Skinner. Not really a manager sim like the others, but with the option of up to 15 players, a lot of fun nevertheless.

DR, DR THERE'S A *DOOM* CLONE ON MY PC!

Just when you thought that it was safe to open the pages of the games press without encountering yet another 3D, first-person perspective shoot-'em-up, Merit Software have gone and released *The Fortress of Dr Radiaki*, a 3D, first-person perspective beat, shoot and slash-'em-up that's not a million miles away from you know what.

Unlike *Doom* it was designed by the blokes who brought us *Privateer*, features such delights as fully rendered backgrounds, over 20 highly detailed nasties, 15 levels of play and 3D "surround" sound effects. The control system is also very easy to use – you simply hold down the left mouse button to move and steer, and tap the right button to hack, slash, shoot, club enemies to death making the game very easy to get into, and (wonder of wonders) the nasties are intelligent – i.e. they won't simply lunge at you at random, but will try to outflank you, ambush you, even run away, whilst others won't attack unless you attack them first.

The game is coming out on CD-ROM and floppy with the former featuring smoother enemy animations, more sound effects and additional levels. At a price though – you'll need at least a 486SX with 8Mb of RAM to go doctor bashing if you want the whole kit 'n' caboodle. Look out for a full review next month. Contact Merit on 091 385 7755.

THEN 3 COME ALONG AT ONCE

AT LAST THE WAIT IS OVER. THREE LIMITED EDITION COMPILATION PACKS FROM LUCASARTS ARE COMING YOUR WAY. WITH A COMBINATION OF NAIL-BITING DRAMA, SIDE-SPLITTING HUMOUR, DARING ORIGINALITY AND BREATHTAKING GRAPHICS, YOU'LL KNOW IT'S ALL BEEN WORTH WAITING FOR.

X-WING™, B-WING™, IMPERIAL PURSUIT™

PICKING UP THE ACTION FROM THE TRILOGY OF MEGA MOVIES, GET TO GRIPS WITH A FIGHT AND FLIGHT SPECTACULAR THAT NEVER STOPS FOR BREATH. STRAPPED INTO THE COCKPIT FOR A SPACE BATTLE SIMULATION THAT'S GENERATIONS AHEAD, YOU'LL BE KNOCKED BACK IN YOUR SEAT WITH A SENSE OF REALITY THAT'S JUST AWESOME.

"ONE OF THE MOST ADDICTIVE GAMES I'VE PLAYED..." PC ZONE

SAM AND MAX HIT THE ROAD™

BOUNDING ACROSS THE STATES, SAM - A CAUTIOUS CANINE - AND MAX - A HYPERKINETIC RABBIT, WHISK YOU AWAY ON AN IRREVERENT ROAD TRIP ADVENTURE. THE ESCAPADES WILL LEAVE YOU HOWLING AND THE EXQUISITE FULL SCREEN GRAPHICS SERVE UP A COCKTAIL OF CHARMING ANIMATION AND THE FUNNIEST ONE-LINERS EVER TO HIT YOUR SCREEN.

"THOROUGHLY RECOMMENDED" 91% PC ACTION

DAY OF THE TENTACLE™

DAY OF THE TENTACLE IS LIKE NOTHING ELSE YOU'VE EVER SEEN, HEARD OR PLAYED BEFORE. IN ONE ZANY ADVENTURE YOU'VE GOT BIZARRE INTERWOVEN PLOTS, A LIBERAL DOSE OF OUTRAGEOUS HUMOUR, SNAZZY GRAPHICS AND A HUNDRED WAYOUT SOUND EFFECTS. PLUS THAT ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN ANY BIG-TIME ARCADE ADVENTURE - BRAIN BLASTING PUZZLES. IT WILL GRIP YOU THE SECOND YOU PRESS 'PLAY'.

"IN SHORT, IT'S BRILLIANT" PC FORMAT

INDIANA JONES® AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS™

THE ENEMIES PREPARE TO BLAST THE CIVILIZED WORLD TO KINGDOM COME AS THEY RACE TO RETRIEVE THE SECRET EXPLOSIVE BURIED IN THE LOST CITY OF ATLANTIS. ONE MAN STANDS IN THEIR WAY, THE MAN WITH THE HAT! A GRAPHIC ADVENTURE THAT WILL TRULY TEST YOUR GREY MATTER WITH SOME OF THE TOUGHEST PUZZLES YET.

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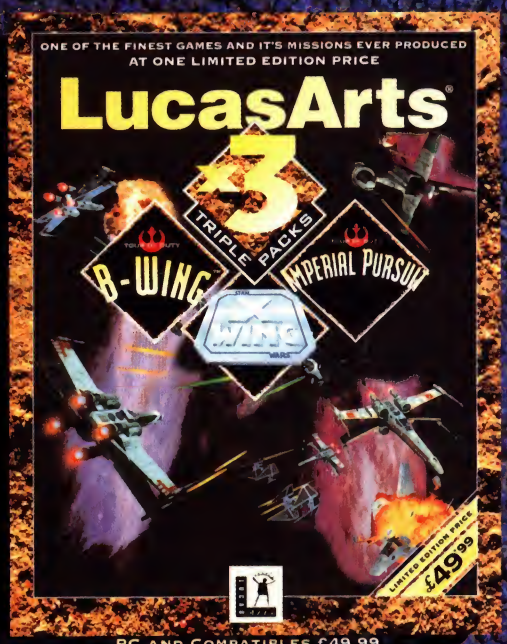
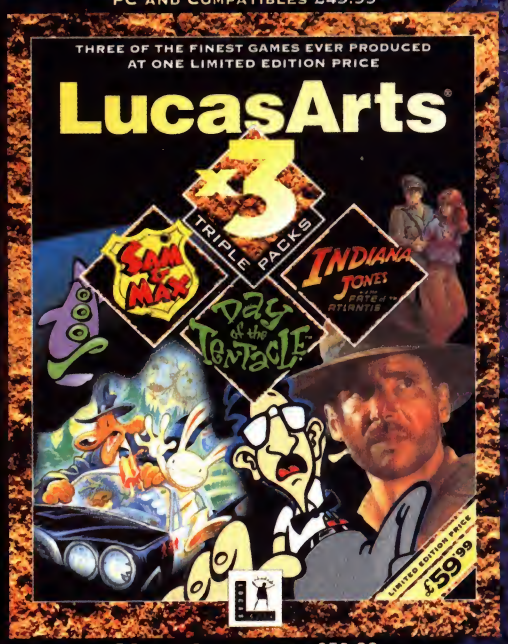


PC AND COMPATIBLES £49.99



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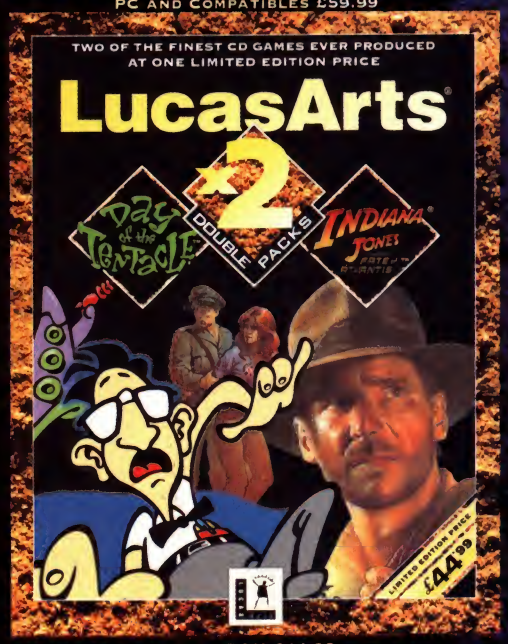

PC CD-ROM £44.99

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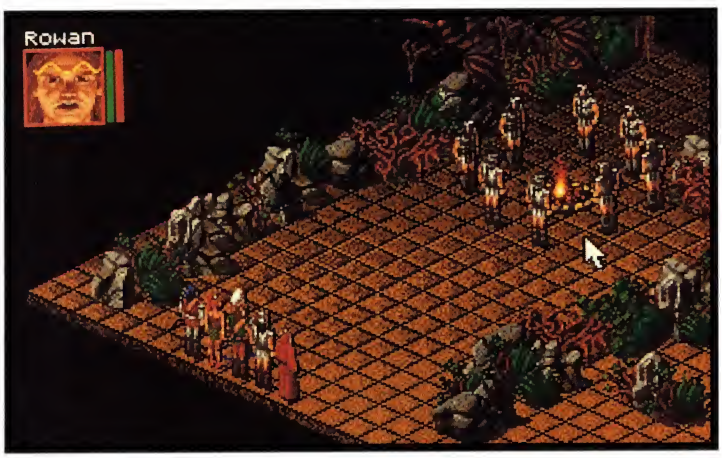
Bulletin

(Left) Star Trail features more monsters than there's fluff in your anorak pocket.

STAR TRAIL: REALMS OF ARKANIA

(Right) Fully animated, phased time isometric combat – yeah, but does it feel like you're actually there?



PERVY GAME ALERT! What is it about anoraks (or should that be raincoats?) and RPGers? Game developers Attic have obviously spotted a link somewhere, their new RPG *Realms of Arkania* attempts to be, shall we say, as visually appealing as possible.

Similar in style to the *Ultima* series of RPGs, it features fully animated, phased time isometric combat, smooth-scrolling 3D movement, an easy to use player interface and more monsters, weapons and magical items than you can shake a staff at. It's coming out on floppy and CD-ROM soon priced at £44.99 and £49.99 respectively. Contact US Gold on 021 606 1800.

PC ACTION REPLAY V.4 GIVES YOU MORE

The latest and best version of PC *ACTION REPLAY* with Version 4.0 operating system is out now for under £70. Offering a range of new features, it can now be used with 'protected' games such as *Doom, Doom 2, UFO, Mortal Kombat, Street Fighter 2*, etc. There's also an improved screen grabber, music tracker and an advanced user mode.

And there's more! *PC ACTION REPLAY* now uses EEprom 'Flash' technology which means that it can be upgraded by users themselves without the need to even remove it from their machine – just by simply downloading the latest version free from the online ACTION REPLAY BBS or floppy.

If existing owners would like their *PC ACTION REPLAY* upgraded to feature onboard flash EEprom then Datel will upgrade the unit for just £20. Not bad at all. Contact Datel on 0782 744182.

Anorak Corner

Star Trek: The Next Generation – Interactive Technical Manual

Quite possibly the biggest release of the year is upon us. *Star Trek: The Next Generation – Interactive Technical Manual* for Windows is finally here. Now Trekkie fans can live the dream and "walk through" the most famous star cruiser of all time – the USS Enterprise NCC-1701-D whilst listening to the voices of Jonathon Frakes (who plays Commander Riker) and Majel Barrett Roddenberry (the voice of the computer and the nurse in the original *Star Trek*).

The "Official Starfleet Virtual Tour" is sad (sorry – typo!) said to be accurate down to the very last detail and will retail at around £44.95.

BREAKING AWAY FROM THE FLEET

HIGH SEAS Trader

Ever wanted to **sail** into the sunset? Visit **ports** of call known only to grizzled **18th century** sea captains?

Then let our unique **first-person** perspective and stunning **3-D** graphics put the wind in your sails! **Swashbuckle** away as you **trade** goods, vanquish **enemy ships** and create routes to **riches**. Take time to gossip in local **taverns**, repair **cannonball** damage, and stoke up your **crew's** morale. (A little rum, perhaps?)

Chart your progress with our authentic **navigational** aids, and revel in a world long gone: Where **fortunes** are fiercely defended, and only **skill** stands between you and the deep blue sea!

Features:

- Variety of goods to trade and passengers to carry.
- Command a crew of soldiers, sailors and apprentices.
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- Buy and enhance ships from several models.
- Highly intuitive interface.
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Travel the world in search of riches

Visit exotic ports on many continents

Engage enemy ships in realistic sea combat

Impressions

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IBM PC Screenshots may vary

Bulletin

GALLUP CHARTS

So many games, so little time – these days, shopping for your PC can be a nightmare. But now, with the help of Gallup's handy household charts, you can check out what you should be playing. There's something for everyone here: full-price PC titles, budget games and even a selection of CD-ROM titles.

Top 20 Full Price Titles	
1. Sim City 2000	Maxis/Mindscape
2. Doom 2	Virgin
3. TIE Fighter	LucasArts
4. Colonization	Microprose
5. FIFA International Soccer	Electronic Arts
6. Theme Park	Electronic Arts
7. X-Wing	US Gold
8. Transport Tycoon	Microprose
9. TFX	Ocean
10. Microsoft Space Simulator	Microsoft
11. Microsoft Flight Simulator v.5	Microsoft
12. Lemmings 2	Psygnosis
13. Daemonsgate	Gametek
14. System Shock	Electronic Arts
15. Indy Car Racing	Virgin
16. Champtionship Manager 93	Domark
17. Premier Manager 2	Gremlin Graphics
18. Card Shop Plus	Mindscape
19. Award Winners – Gold Edition	Empire
20. Krusty's Super Fun House	Virgin

Top 10 PC Budget Titles	
1. Monkey Island 2	Kixx
2. Champ. Manager 94: End of Season	Domark
3. Operation Combat 2	Junkyard
4. Doom (MS)	Micro Star
5. Great Naval Battles	Kixx
6. Doom (TS)	Titanium Seal
7. The Premiership	Code Masters
8. Arcade Pool	Team 17
9. Populous 2	Hit Squad
10. Easy To Learn Computing	Premier Collection

Top 10 CD-ROM Titles	
1. Doom 2	Virgin
2. Under A Killing Moon	US Gold
3. Ecstatica	Psygnosis
4. Theme Park	Electronic Arts
5. TFX	Ocean
6. Rebel Assault	US Gold
7. PGA Tour Golf 486	Electronic Arts
8. Privateer/Strike Commander	Electronic Arts
9. Armored Fist	Novalogic
10. Sam & Max Hit The Road	US Gold

The Editor's 10 Inches

Pet hate of the month this month is...games that use pre-rendered graphics that are spooled in off CD. Again, as last month, all I'm really doing here is acting as devil's advocate, whilst at the same time reporting back on comments that were made in and around the PC Zone offices...

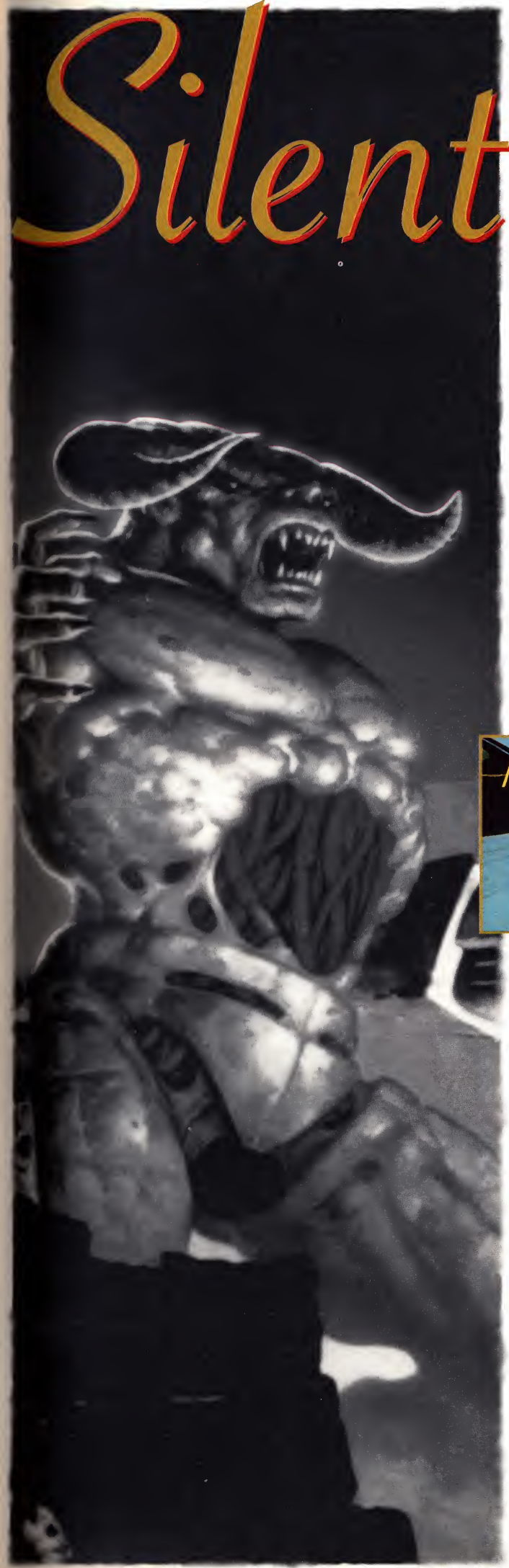
BASICALLY, it all really started when CyberWar turned up. Three CDs worth of game...and a couple of kilobytes of gameplay. What the hell is going on? Yes, it looks very pretty and will probably sell very well on the back of that...but surely half of the PC games-playing population isn't so completely and utterly brain-dead that they are simply sucked in by some pretty looking graphics. CyberWar is quite possibly the ultimate 'bimbo' game. It looks gorgeous but it's not got much in the brains department. It was happily playing away on a PC in the corner of the office this month for the best part of two days. At first there was a huge gaggle of people standing around wanting to take a look, but within the first half-hour or so virtually everyone...except Chris who was the poor sod who had to review the thing, had lost interest. It's like being trapped down the pub having to talk to someone you've asked out only to realise you've got absolutely NOTHING in common.

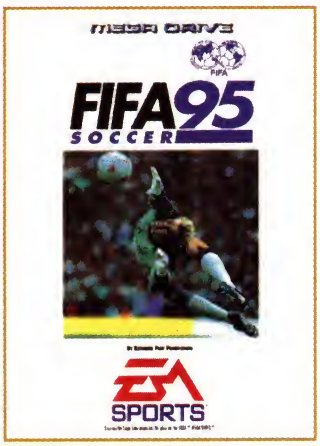
It's not just CyberWar that's guilty though. It's only the latest in a long line of games that started with 7th Guest (which Chris actually claims to like...but hey, maybe he likes bimbos) and has been carried on through Rebel Assault (which everyone pretended to like - because it was Star Wars, but actually hated - because it was boring) and is being continued with all sorts of 'fab' new games including Interplay's forthcoming Cyberia (nice graphics...er, let's hope the gameplay kicks in before it's released) and this month's 'stunner' Creature Shock...which I'll concede is heading in the right direction because it actually involves some random elements.

When will developer realise that people like to play games where there's a certain amount of uncertainty? What's the point in playing something that's exactly the same EVERY time you play it? Where's the fun in that? Once you've played it a couple of times you know what to do, and there's no challenge any more. Surely part of the incentive to play a game is to be challenged by something that is unknown? Otherwise it's just like watching a film thousands of times and always knowing what happens next...in short it's BORING, BORING, BORING. It doesn't work...the stuff may sell at the moment simply because it looks pretty and different, but in the long run people are going to look back at the mid-nineties and say "aren't games good these days...much better than back in 1994 when we had all that pre-rendered, pre-determined bollocks". These games will never be classics, they won't be remembered and will never be cherished in the same way as something like Dungeon Master, or X-Wing, or even Jet-Pac on the Speccy. It has to stop now.

Ahem, right then...now that's off my chest - if you want to comment on all of this you can contact us on the usual address or e-mail us on Compuserve at PC Zone 100142,2152

Silent night...

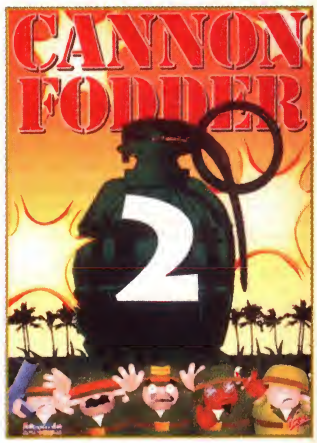




FIFA SOCCER 95
MD

UNDER A KILLING MOON*
PC CD Rom

NASCAR RACING*
PC CD Rom
(Screen Shot)



CANNON FODDER 2*
PC/AG

THEME PARK*
AG/A1200/3DO/PC/
PC CD Rom

DONKEY KONG
GB

*** Free mouse worth £14.99 with purchase of this PC title**

HMV

Everything but silence for Christmas

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COVER DISK

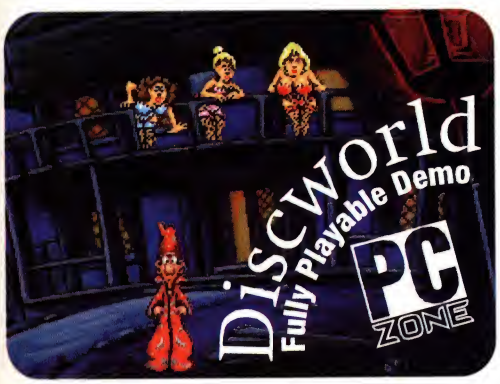
"Happy Christmas to you!" Some mags give you quantity when it comes to their cover disk, others sometimes manage quality. Never fear, at *PC Zone* we always give you both. On this month's HD we've got *Discworld*, the amazing new adventure from Psygnosis. As for the CD-ROM, Christmas really has come early for you lucky CD-ROM owners. This month's full to the brim with hits including *Magic Carpet*, *Powerdrive*, *King's Quest 7*, *Retribution*, *Cyberwar*, *Christmas Lemmings* and loads more! "Happy Christmas to you!"

HD Installation

To install the games on this month's HD, make the drive containing the disk current by typing A: then type Install and follow the instructions within the games.

Discworld by Psygnosis

Classic adventuring cometh this way courtesy of Terry Pratchett and Psygnosis. Check out our exclusive review and interview on page 56. The game's purely mouse driven, simply point and click where you want to go – your right mouse button "looks" and the left "interacts". To open up your inventory, click on Rincewind and drag stuff out to use it. Unfortunately there's no sound on this demo 'cos we couldn't fit it on the HD, but it's all rather splendid nevertheless.



CD-ROM Installation

To install any of the playable demos on this month's CD you should make the drive containing your CD current by typing, for example, D: Then type PCZONE, and follow the installation instructions on the screen. The programmes we've got for you this month are as follows:

Insert the CD into your CD drive and make it current by typing D: then type PCZONE. A menu will appear with the list of this month's CD demos – simply highlight the game you want to play using the cursor keys, press RETURN – follow the on–screen instructions and away you go.

Magic Carpet

Bullfrog's shag-pile spectacular has secretly been voted 'Game Of The Year' by almost everyone who's played it. Join the Carpet Cult, using your mouse to fly through the air with the greatest of ease, collecting mana as you go to give you power and knocking seven shades of Sheikh 'n' Vac out of all and sundry in this fully playable demo.

CONTROLS

MOUSE to fly your carpet & ARROW KEYS to accelerate/decelerate. NUMBER KEYS Select spells MOUSE BUTTONS - Fire spells [&] to toggle screen size

Powerdrive

Power up and put your foot down with US Gold's stonking new rally driving game. Simply select your car and away you go. The car will automatically stay in the middle of the road, all you have to do is complete each course as fast as possible which requires some pretty mean driving and the odd tug on the hand brake.

CONTROLS

CURSOR KEYS (Left/Right) INSERT – Accelerate ENTER – Handbrake SPACE – Toggle forward/reverse gear.

NASCAR Racing

Papyrus have done it again, gone and created another stormin' drivin' sim, that is! If you liked *IndyCar Racing* then you'll love *NASCAR*, with its beautifully rendered hi-res graphics, realistic control system and thunderin' sound effects. Watch this one storm up the charts when it is released later this month.

CONTROLS

Basically it's your numeric keypad innit! – i.e. **4** left **6** right **8** accelerate **9** change up **3** change down **2** reverse **5** brake. You can toggle your view using **F10**.

Lemmings' Christmas

Not to be confused with last year's cash–in which was imaginatively titled *Christmas Lemmings*. You know what to do on this one, surely? Well, it's mouse driven – simply point and click on a lemming, a function and off you trot. And remember kids, "They're not bigger, they're closer!", or so say Psygnosis.

CONTROLS

MOUSE

Cyclone

Another actionfest shoot-'em-up from SSI that has you marching around a maze shooting things (sound familiar?) You know what you have to do, soldier!!

CONTROLS

MOUSE and CURSOR keys. Use RETURN to select the options screen.

Dreamweb

Oops! Should've been on last month's disc this, but it got lost in the rush or something. But it's here now, eh? And that's what matters. What's it about? Well, it's dark, it's moody, it's futuristic,

No CD?

If you're sitting reading this thinking "Simian shag pots, I've only got the HD version," then fear no longer for help is at hand in the form of Miles Tudor!

Simply phone **071 917 7693** between 10.30am and 6.00pm, and grumble to him that your local shop has run out of CD issues, no other bugger stocks the CD issues, the dog ate my homework etc., and Miles will help sort you out. Diamond geezer, eh?

IMPORTANT

Some of the programs on the CD are shareware, and as such are supplied as an evaluation service to our readers. If you like the programs and intend to continue using them, you should register them with the publishers concerned. In return you will receive updated versions, extra levels and loads of other stuff. The cover disc has been virus checked. However, neither Dennis Publishing, *PC Zone* nor any associated companies can be deemed liable for any problems that may arise from use of this disc.

it's surreal, it's dead good and it's from Empire. Basically, you play this chap whose gotta get into the hotel and, well... work it out for yourself.

CONTROLS

MOUSE – Use the mouse to move around screen and click on the options on the left of the screen to access them.

Dominus

"You'll never play this game again!" claim US Gold, "Arrh – but you will," we reply, 'cos it's rather special. This game is rather complex and comes with heaps of instructions, but we can't fit them all in, so you'll basically have to find your way around using the MOUSE to click on the various icons. Basically, you have to defend your castle from marauding marauders by attacking them, inventing/laying traps etc and capturing them. You can then interrogate 'em and genetically 'merge' them with other creatures to produce even scarier monsters.

CONTROLS

MOUSE

Incredible Machine 2

The crazy sequel to the crazy original that has you building silly machines from Sierra. Very easy to use – just a case of point and click with your MOUSE on the various icons.

CONTROLS

MOUSE

Cyberwar

The long-awaited sequel to the *Lawnmower Man* from SCI is finally here and this playable demo will give you a chance to put it through its paces yourself. *Cyberwar* boasts superb graphics, an amazing soundtrack, excellent sound effects, and challenging and addictive gameplay. This demo contains the fast-moving Cyber Boogie level which will challenge your reflexes to the full. There's also a rolling demo of other parts of the game.

CONTROLS:

Use the ARROW keys on the keyboard to go up, down, left and right and the SPACE BAR to fire.

Warcraft

This is a very addictive strategy game that's easy to get into, from Interplay. Similar in style to games like *Civilisation*, *Ambush at Sorinor*, and the all-time classic *Populous*. Your objective is to build establishments and weapons before your enemy and then go and give him a good seeing to. Take the side of either the Humans or the Orcs in this playable scenario from the game. Start by training people at the town hall (click on it) then send them to mine gold or chop lumber (click on unit to highlight it and then forest or gold mine). Eventually you'll be able to build a barracks and train more soldiers to send into battle.

CONTROLS

Use the MOUSE to highlight units and buildings, and click on the options to activate them.

It's the year 2020.
The New Age meets man's oldest profession: WAR.

FRONT LINES

The Future of Combat is Now.

In the future you may have lasers, hovertanks, and powered armor, but do you have the skill to command these forces to victory? If it's total control you want, we've got it. In a turn-based, detailed, create-your-own, hex wargame that blows out the competition with astonishing SVGA graphics and sound effects that will rattle your cage.

The standard wargame just got a whole new set of standards.

Features:

- 256 color SVGA graphics
- Tactical, turn-based hex wargame
- Full scenario builder & unit editor
- 14 types of near-future military hardware
- Fully animated movement & combat.

Pull up information on any class of units

Full scenario builder and editor

Impressions

Readme.txt

Most of the demos on your disc will have a **Readme.txt** file which you should have a look at if you're having trouble loading in a game, setting up your sound card, configuring your joystick or you just want to know more about the game. If you're stuck then READ IT!

Black Hawk

Take a walk down memory lane to the times when gameplay was more important than graphic splendour in this very simple yet very addictive platform game from Interplay.

Guide your hero through the levels, killing monsters and basts, and solving puzzles to get to the exit at the end. Passwords will appear intermittently. Write these down and you can restart this playable level at the point you stopped (i.e. died).

CONTROLS

Use the **ARROW** keys to move and the **SPACE BAR** to fire. More detailed key instructions are in the **readme.txt** file that come with the game.

King's Quest 7

The latest (and greatest) *King's Quest* graphic adventure yet from Roberta Williams is bigger and better, and distinctly more 'Disney' than ever. More cutesome and cuddly than a fluffy kitten eating a packet of Rolos, you play the role of 'sweetie' Rosella (you control her by using your **MOUSE**), you've accidentally fallen into a fantasy world (just like Alice). Before you can get back home you must befriend lots of fluffy little creatures, save the world and avoid anything that looks even remotely nasty, bad or wicked.

Minimum System Requirements

If you've got an MPC2 machine then you're laughin', aren't you. However, most programs will run on a 386SX with 4Mb RAM, though some games will require up to 590K of base memory.

CONTROL

MOUSE

Doom 2 V.1.7 Patch

Upgrades your existing game to the latest version which includes better sound, sorts out the bugs and makes it all a lot more playable – Ooooh!

Creature Shock

Battle incredibly realistic alien monsters in Virgin's excellent 3D adventure. Superbly modelled using 3D Studio, this all-action shoot-'em-up takes you to the very core of an alien asteroid. Investigate the tunnels and interact with the landscape to find health and weapon power-ups. Each creature has a weak spot which you have to find and then shoot the bugger to bits.

CONTROLS

There's an icon in the middle of the screen with arrows indicating which direction you can travel in. Left click on an arrow with the mouse and off you go. In battle, use the left mouse button to fire and the right button to activate your shield. Be careful, though, using your shield drains your gun's energy.

Retribution

This is Gremlin's first attempt at a CD action game and pretty good it is, too. The full game features several space ships and even tanks you can drive across an ultra-realistic landscape. This action-packed taster will give you a good idea what to expect from the full version.

CONTROLS

Use the **MOUSE** to move your ship. Left button to fire lasers and right button for missiles. **Keys - 1-9** to control speed, **T** to target, **M** for map, **TAB** for afterburner, **C** to release chaff and **F10** to lower detail for slower machines.

Hardball 4

This is a playable demo of the latest incarnation of Accolade's baseball game. Features include SVGA graphics, commentary by an award-winning sportscaster, instant replay and two million other things besides. Refer to the **readme.txt** file for spec details.

CONTROLS

Use the **MOUSE** to ascertain where the ball goes and to activate your players.

Off The Boards

As usual all the shareware as featured in this month's OTB is on the disc. For instructions and general gist, give it a read.

HELP

Still can't get the blasted thing running? Tearin' your hair out? Thrown your keyboard out the window? Calm down now, it's only a game! Go and make yourself a nice cuppa tea, pick up the phone and speak to our help line, There, there, there...

HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on
0274 736990
Every weekday between
9am and 4pm

CD–ROM HELP

Phone Miles Tudor on
071 917 7693
Every weekday between
2pm and 6pm (Not Wednesdays)

If possible, have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call. If you can't, write down as much as you know about your PC – i.e. make/sound card/CD–ROM drive etc. Make sure you have a pen and paper handy when you ring to jot down any info.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

There are different ways of setting up the memory on your PC and different games need different set-ups. To change the way your PC's memory is set up you have to edit your **CONFIG.SYS** in DOS and REM out the appropriate line depending on whether the program uses XMS or EMS. If you have DOS 6.0 or later, the easiest way to do this is to type **MEMMAKER** at the DOS prompt and say yes to EMS if that's what the game needs or no if you want XMS. This has the added benefit of freeing up extra conventional memory automatically, too. If you're using an earlier version of DOS, go to the C: prompt and type: **edit config.sys**. Look for a line that reads **device=c:/dos/emm386.exe** (if it's not there type it in). If you need XMS, then add **NOEMS**. If you need EMS, go to the end of the line, type a space, and type **1024 RAM** or however much you need. If you get stuck look at the **Readme.txt** file in the game or ring our helpline.

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

RETRIBUTION

STATE OF THE ART GAMING TECHNOLOGY FOR YOUR PC & PC CD-ROM

You lower yourself into your cockpit knowing that the annihilation of Krellan life is little reward for the millions of your race who have been "harvested". You have hatred in your heart and become driven by one compulsion ....

retribution /ˌretri'bju:ʃ(ə)n/ *n.* requital usu. for evil done; vengeance.

- **Over 100 MB of animation and digitised speech (CD version only) .**
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- **Superior artificial intelligence of the Krellan enemy.**
- **Exclusively commissioned musical score.**
- **Stunning range of in game SFX.**
- **Box artwork by Kevin Walker 2000 AD/JUDGE DREDD.**

THEY'VE HAD THEIR POUND OF FLESH

Gremlin Interactive

IT'S TIME TO TURN THE TABLES

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1

2

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PC PRO

Blueprint

Cyberia

PUBLISHER: Interplay | PRICE: Tba

TELEPHONE: 0235 821666 | RELEASE DATE: December

It's sort of a bit like *Rebel Assault* but with different graphics, and it's shaping up to look absolutely excellent. John Davison takes a peek at one of Interplay's first CD-only titles.

I'LL COME CLEAN... even though I'm a complete and utter *Star Wars* nutter, I didn't really like *Rebel Assault* very much. I'm sorry, I know it was dead popular and I know it looks very pretty and all, but it just didn't really get me going... it was far too simplistic and linear. The thing is though, lots of other people thought that it was an exceptionally smart game and proceeded to buy it by the bucket-load, making it one of the most successful CD games of all time. People are partial to a pretty game... and that's why *Cyberia* from Interplay is also going to cause one hell of a fuss when it is released next month.

At its basic level, *Cyberia* is really nothing more than an extremely elaborate, pre-rendered, 3D-shoot 'em-up with the occasional "walk-around-the- oh so pretty-backgrounds" adventure bits thrown in for good measure. Add to this a stirring sound track, provided courtesy of Thomas Dolby, and loads of speech and we have what I believe is called a "multimedia experience".

What's all this then?

As we have come to expect these days, there is a suitably cyberpunky/futuristic storyline to go with all of these fancy graphics. The year is 2027 and in true sci-fi style the world is pretty much stuffed. The global economy has collapsed and there are now a mere four billion people kicking around the planet. Most of the world's governments have collapsed and as a result pretty much everything is ruled by highly-organized criminal cartels.

Now, as you would expect, the pockets of world-order that remain are somewhat pissed off about the decline of civilization and as a result they have established the FWA: Free World Alliance. Unfortunately, though, they're a bit crappy and need a seriously good kick up the backside if they are actually going to make any kind of impact on the cartels. Surprise surprise, this is where you come in...

You are Zak, a cyberpunk/hacker/flash-git who knows just about everything there is to know about nanotechnology, cybernetics, fighter piloting and martial arts. You also, probably, have the sexual capacity of a rutting rhino and an amazing ability to pull wimmin (but it doesn't actually mention that in the press release). You are, in fact, a miracle of intelligence and physical ability – the sort of bloke that doesn't exist r

(Below) The animation of the characters in the "adventure bits" is really quite stunning and is actually very realistic indeed.

ECSTATICA 18

The world's first virtual-movie computer game.

This game was developed by Andrew Spencer. Animation by Alain Maindron.

CD-rom

(Above) It's not just the gameplay which features pre-rendered graphics, you also have the obligatory cut-scenes which pop up between vital bits of action

☞ anywhere except in crap sci-fi movies and computer games. Unfortunately, although you're a super chap, you are also in prison for hacking into the world central bank. (See, you're not that clever – you went and got caught.) In return for your release you are charged with retrieving a top-secret military vehicle known as "Cyberia" which will apparently sort everything out. The only problem is that the vehicle is hidden deep within a guarded complex... and the cartels know about it.

Flash git!

What follows is a combination of extremely flash-looking, pre-rendered shooty bits and 3D-pseudo-*Alone In the Dark* like bits (except much, much simpler and pre-rendered 3D-Studio style rather than polygons).

From what we've seen, not only does it look drop-dead gorgeous (just check out the screen shots) but it's also H-U-G-E. There are loads of different levels to blast your way through and what would seem to be hour upon hour of gameplay

Drop-Dead Gorgeous

I don't know if you've played many of these pre-rendered things before but if there's one thing that's wrong with them it's the fact they move so unnaturally. The graphics seem to pan around with pin-point accuracy and only succeed, therefore, in leaving the player feeling totally detached and not really "part" of the whole setting. *Cyberia* is certainly different, though; the way in which the "camera" (for want of a better word) moves around is very natural indeed and it behaves very much in the same way as the human eye. The viewpoint moves in such a way that it "leads" into the action and bobs around as though you really are inside a high-performance fighter craft. Add to this the fact that all of this gorgeous-looking action is accompanied by some of the best sound effects I've ever heard in a computer game, and you have a very, er, "real" experience.

> "...There's a deep, rumbley-rumbley noise that throbs away in the background that you just have to hear – it's smart."

Oh yes, I'd also like to mention that there's a deep, rumbley-rumbley noise that throbs away in the background that you just have to hear – it's smart. You know the sound they have on the Dolby Surround or THX bits at the cinema where they have lots of throbbing noises? Well the sounds in *Cyberia* are a bit like that.

Christmas Goodies

Interplay assures us that *Cyberia* will be available in time for Christmas this year, as it is hoping that this will be one of the "big" games for the season. As we go to press there are a number of plans for the product including a separate release of the Thomas Dolby sound track as a "proper" audio CD that may well also include a playable demo of the game.

Whatever happens, though, we're expecting our review copy of the game to arrive any day now and we'll be bringing you a stonking review in next month's *PC Zone*.

(Below) In terms of gameplay style, Cyberia owes a lot to Rebel Assault.

All of this gorgeous-looking action is accompanied by wicked sound effects.

PC ZONE

Aces of the Deep **is the latest simulation from the Sierra/Dynamix label... Quite possibly the most accurate submarine simulation to date, it easily puts the likes of *Silent Service* to shame. Check out the review on page 94...**

Padlock View: Alt+F2	**Abort Mission: CTRL+D**
Launch Bold: CTRL+R	**1...6: Engine Speed**
Options Menu: CTRL+O	**Straight & Level: 5 (keypad)**
Pause: CTRL+P	**Fire Tube: CTRL+1...6**

F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10
Control Room	Periscope	Binoculars	Bridge	Charts	Torpedoes	Damage Report	Report Room	Captain's Log	Torpedo Camera

W	T	I	O	P	-	+	B/SPACE
Stop-watch	Open TDC	Identify Target	Check Oxygen	Periscope Depth	Decrease time comp	Increase time comp	Repeat Last Msg

ACES OF THE DEEP

This keyboard template has been created by *PC Zone* for purchasers of the game *Aces of the Deep*, published by Sierra. It is NOT approved or endorsed in any way by Sierra. All rights recognised.

A	S	D	F	H	ENTER
Un/Man AA Gun	Surface Boat	Un/Man Deck Gun	Check Fuel	Heading to view	Reset Time 1/1

Z	C	V	B	SPACEBAR	<	>
Zoom Periscope	Crash Dive	View to Heading	Check Battery	Select/Deselect Target	View Left	View Right

What Klik & Play can mean to you

lik & Play has been acclaimed as the biggest-ever breakthrough in creating Windows games for the PC. Because it enables anyone – even a first-time user – to start producing games just as exciting as the ones you buy.

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Blueprint

Alone in the Dark 3

PUBLISHER: Infogrames | PRICE: Tba

TELEPHONE: 071 738 8199 | RELEASE DATE: February '95

...Or "A Fistful of Horrors" to give you its full title. *The Alone* series draws to a close with this, the final episode... John Davison finds out what Carnby gets up to next.

ALONE IN THE DARK was, without a shadow of a doubt, a truly remarkable game. During a time when the games market had become a little staid, Infogrames and its industrious French development team came up with a new kind of adventure game that mixed traditional ideas with some spectacular 3D-polygon graphics. After proving to be a monster success, the inevitable happened... we got a sequel, and although it was bigger than the original, it lost a bit of its charm due to the more action-oriented nature of its gameplay.

Now the series is drawing to a close and Infogrames is putting the finishing touches to the final part – an absolutely epic CD-specific title that brings the tale of Edward Carnby "supernatural detective" to a close.

The new tale tells of a woman by the name of Emily Hartwood, a young antiques dealer, who has moved to Hollywood to fulfil her dream: to work in the movies. After harassing every studio in town, she finally finds a job at the Hill Century Studio as a script writer. At the beginning of the summer of 1925 Emily finds herself on the shooting of a film called "The Lost Ranger", which is set in a tiny ghost town called Slaughter Gulch (subtle name huh? Bet nothing weird ever happens there eh?), deep in the Mojave Desert. On the night of June 3rd, one of the horses hired by Hill Century is found five miles away from Slaughter Gulch, crazed with terror and trembling with exhaustion. Scrawled in Emily's handwriting on the saddle are just two words: "Call Carnby".

> "I won't spoil things... but I feel that it is necessary to mention that Carnby actually pops his clogs..."

The plot thickens

Ooh... scary stuff or what? As the game begins, Carnby arrives at Slaughter Gulch and is immediately plunged into a typically "*Alone*-y-ghosty-ghosty"-type situation. Take, for example, the first character that you meet: a John Wayne-esque, swaggering cowboy-type chap who doesn't have any skin. (Hmm, very nice.) From this point on things get progressively weirder as you find out that 50 years ago the area on which the town was built was stolen from Navajo Indians who used the area as some kind of sacred burial ground thingy... The result is that, the chappy responsible, Jedediah Stone, is now one of those undead-type people (something to do with the spirits and the land or some other such weirdness... it's a French game remember?) and it is he who is holding Emily hostage.

Your job, as ever, is to be the hunky hero and dive on in there to rescue the fair maiden and save the day.

It's all the same to me...

Now then, as far as overall gameplay goes, this isn't really that much different from the previous games. Obviously, apart from the new cowboy/spooky-spooky plot, there are enhancements to the way in which the game plays, and on top of this there is now a new bit of weirdness to sink your teeth in

(Below) Graphically, Alone 3 does seem to be much more detailed than the previous two games.

(Below and Below Right) The same location with Carnby the Cowboy... and Carnby the cougar.

to... The first game brought us *Lovecraft*-inspired occultism, the second demonstrated distinct voodoo tendencies, and now we have alchemy to deal with. But hang on, isn't alchemy all about turning bits of crap into gold? Well, er... yes, it is actually. I'm not quite sure what the crack is here because whereas all previous spookiness has been based on the occult, alchemy is nothing more than the (ahem) pseudoscientific predecessor to chemistry (I'm dead clever me, look at that... that first word had six syllables.) Anyway, confused French scripting aside, it's safe to say that there is much supernatural weirdness to be dealt with and all kinds of Indian spiritual kind of stuff cropping up from time to time as well. Anyone who's seen the first *Poltergeist* movie will have an idea of the sort of thing I mean, you know, spirits, demons, the undead rising from the grave. Nothing particularly out of the ordinary.

I won't spoil things too much about the plot – but I feel that it is necessary to mention that Carnby actually pops his clogs in *Alone 3*. (Whoops, there, I've said it. He dies, kaput, dead, doomed, meat.) The thing is, though, for some bizarre reason he comes back to life as a cougar and you have to finish the game as an animal rather than a human. Bizarre.

...Well, some bits are new

As far as new technical achievements of the game go, there is a fair bit for the development team to be proud of. For a start, we have no less than 270 different backgrounds to go "cor, that looks neat" at, there are more than 60 different characters to interact with (and most of them talk, too), there's a full digital sound track ☞

(Below) For some reason Carnby is transformed into a cougar after he kicks the bucket.

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INFOGRAMES

Distributed by PHILIPS

(Left) Hoorah for Moonshine... you can't buy it down the pub, it could quite possibly kill you – but it's booze. Hoorah for booze.

and full speech throughout, and the animation system employed is vastly improved.

We're assured by Infogrames' UK office that there are scenes which run at approximately 94 frames per second, so we can assume that the thing is going to look extremely smooth.

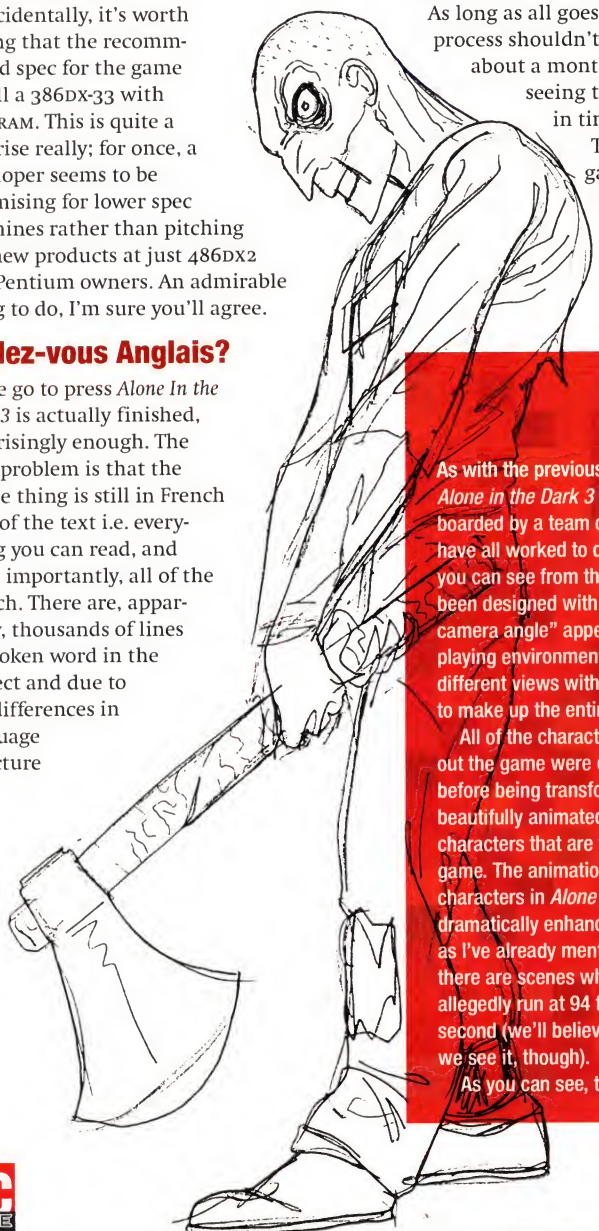
Incidentally, it's worth noting that the recommended spec for the game is still a 386DX-33 with 4MB RAM. This is quite a surprise really; for once, a developer seems to be optimising for lower spec machines rather than pitching the new products at just 486DX2 and Pentium owners. An admirable thing to do, I'm sure you'll agree.

Parlez-vous Anglais?

As we go to press *Alone In the Dark 3* is actually finished, surprisingly enough. The only problem is that the whole thing is still in French – all of the text i.e. everything you can read, and most importantly, all of the speech. There are, apparently, thousands of lines of spoken word in the project and due to the differences in language structure between English and French, a number of changes need to be made to the basic structure of the game. Obviously, the re-recording of all the spoken passages is going to take some time, but apparently, the way it slots in with the gameplay also needs to be changed.

As long as all goes according to plan, this process shouldn't take longer than about a month, and we should be seeing the game in the shops in time for Christmas.

The project is a CD-only game and there are no plans for a floppy version at present.



Interactive Movie Making

As with the previous two *Alone* games, all of the scenes for *Alone in the Dark 3* have been carefully scripted and storyboarded by a team or artists, designers and writers, who have all worked to develop a truly cinematic experience. As you can see from these examples, everything has been designed with the now-familiar "weird camera angle" appearance to produce a distinctive playing environment. Each room has a number of different views with more than 270 scenes drawn to make up the entire game.

All of the characters that appear throughout the game were designed first on paper before being transformed into the beautifully animated polygon characters that are found in the game. The animation of all characters in *Alone 3* has been dramatically enhanced and, as I've already mentioned, there are scenes which allegedly run at 94 frames per second (we'll believe it when we see it, though).

As you can see, there are some bizarre characters in the new game with skeletal cowboys and mad, axe-wielding psychopaths aplenty. (And what self-respecting interactive thriller would be complete without one of these?)

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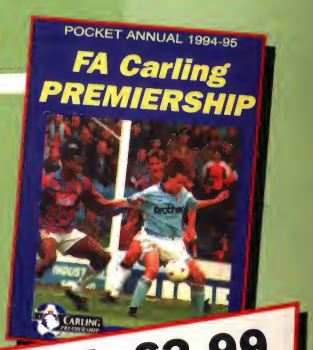

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* Screen shots displayed are representative of IBM PC and Amiga 1200 versions only.

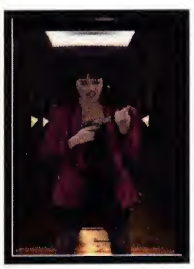
Blueprint

Voyeur

PUBLISHER: Interplay	PRICE: £39.99
TELEPHONE: 0235 821666	RELEASE DATE: December

Drugs, lust, sex, betrayal, murder. Sounds like a normal day in *PC Zone* to us, but in *Voyeur* it's all happening in a mansion, and you've got to video it. Warren Chrismas is watching.

It's the weekend before the American election... Oh sod this, I bet all you really want to know about is the sex, right? (*You're not wrong – Ed.*). Well, before some of our more mature readers come over all Mary Whitehouse (*Sorry? – Ed.*), perhaps we'd better point out that despite the 18 rating, there's no nudity whatsoever in *Voyeur*. (*Warren, what the hell do you think you are doing? 45 thousand readers have just turned the page – Ed.*). But... (*Yes, yes? – Ed.*)



(Right) Alice clapped at Dawn's Chicken Tonight dance routine.

(Below) Brad reluctanly admitted he didn't actually own a pool.

there's a fair bit of rumpy pumpy, lesbian innuendo (*Come back readers, come back! – Ed.*), kinky bondage – all sorts really. (*Right, so what, exactly, is the game all about? – Ed.*). Oops, sorry, almost forgot.

Basically you're a bit of a Merve the Perve, living in an apartment which overlooks the rear of a mansion owned by US presidential election candidate Reed Hawke. His entire family is assembled for the last weekend of the election build-up, but one member, whose identity is concealed, doesn't want Reed to be president and is prepared to reveal a dark secret to sabotage the campaign. And let's face it, with a name like Reed Hawke, the guy deserves to be exposed, er... screwed, er... nailed – no, hang on, caught out – yeah that's the phrase I'm looking for. He deserves to be caught out.

Dirty Videos

Your task is to watch over the mansion, recording conversations, looking for clues, and video taping various liaisons within a 24-hour time limit. When you have enough evidence you can help Hawke's enemy by sending him or her the tape, and eventually call in the police who'll clean up the mess.

You'll need to be quick, though – Reed is prepared to go to any length to be president of the United States, even if it means murdering one of his own flesh and blood. Send the tape to the wrong family member, though, and you can expect to be knocked off Reed's Christmas card list (or something).

I could go on and explain some of the intricacies of the game, but you're gonna get the full low down in a review next month and the fewer words I write, the more room there is for piccies (*and the less you get paid – Ed.*). All you need to know is that for what it's worth, *Voyeur* was a rather large hit on the Philips CD-i, and the translation to PC CD-ROM is looking rather excellent. Oh, and it has lots of nice furniture in it, too.

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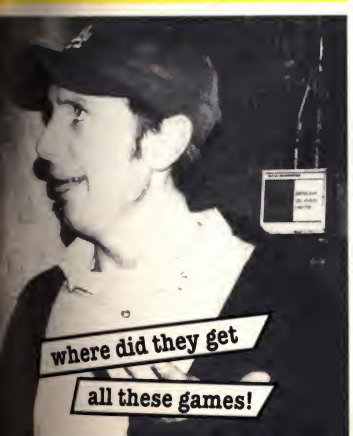

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Blueprint

The Last Dynasty

PUBLISHER: Sierra On-Line | PRICE: £49.99

TELEPHONE: 0734 303322 | RELEASE DATE: January '95

(Right) Norman heads for the bar after nearly being hit by a UFO whilst sunbathing on the beach (as you do).

(Above) No CD-ROM interactive thingy would be complete without the obligatory cinematic fly-bys – TLD's full of 'em.

The Last Dynasty is a fast-paced action movie providing sophisticated combat simulation with action and adventure gaming, all set in a unique futuristic world where heroes must rise and enemies must perish... "But do they wear shoulder pads?" asks Top Man Jeremy Wells?

OOOH! A game that actually attempts to blend all the complexities of a strategy sim with the action and excitement of an arcade shoot 'em up AND virtually fat free! Sounds too good to be true? (Cue dodgy *Lovejoy* lookalike bloke in mini apron with bum hanging out muttering something about washing being dry.) As anyone who has eaten low-fat stuff will know, it's very rarely as good, more often than not has the taste and consistency of panda phlegm and costs at least twice as much as the normal mix of artery hardening, cholesterol-packed gunk that we all know and love.

What, no shoulder pads?

So is it a case of buyer beware or SMAART-OLA!? Well, for a start it's on two CDs. "Big deal" you may cry, "so's *The Best of Elton John* and that's crap!" But whooah there oh cautious CD-ROM fiend, haven't you heard about the CD-ROM revolution that's sweeping the nation? Yep, the days of the "psyggy" game are well and truly numbered, CD-ROM developers have finally grown up and figured out what to do with all that MEG. Sure, you can still keep your fancy intros and soundtracks, but nowadays no product manager worth their weight in SIMMS is going to force a game with no gameplay onto an unsuspecting public, are they?

So, two CDs – sounds promising. Full-screen, high-resolution graphics, 3D-rendered graphics, fractal landscapes, digitised photographs *and* video-captured actors – tell me more. Well, first impressions suggest that *The Last Dynasty* looks more like a game that was initially developed not for the PC but for a machine like Philips' CD-i, in that it's very cinematic, very big and quite a mish mash of action, strategy and live action – or to put it another way, multimedia with knobs on. On the negative side this usually translates as a bit of a melting pot as gameplay, fancy graphics and FMV merge into one, often quite unspectacular, mess. On the positive side, though, it absolutely reeks atmosphere and plot, if it's done properly, that is.

You play the part of a young hero raised on Earth who is suddenly hurled into a cosmic war that stretches across the galaxy. The Evil Masters have one half of the "Ultimate Knowledge" and you have the other half, secreted deep within your brain. You want their half and they want yours and as it's in your head, they ultimately want you. It's up to you, then, to infiltrate The Evil Masters' base, retrieve their half of the knowledge, blast them to bits and save mankind. Simple really.

A tale of two bit(ties)

As with just about every "interactive" thingy that has graced the PC screen so far, the actors have obviously been plucked from the "Which Camera's On?" School of Acting, but don't let that put you off. For as far as the blend of strategy and arcade goes, it all looks rather promising.

You get to fly around in various ships, blasting your way to freedom, navigate various Evil Master bases, running from and laying traps for the enemy and generally switching roles from swashbuckling-star hero to mastermind of rebel forces, as the game and situation dictate.

Last Dynasty is all very nicely woven together with video clips, fly-bys and the plot. Although it's not exactly brimming over with originality, it does trot along nicely enough, giving the whole game a very professional feel.

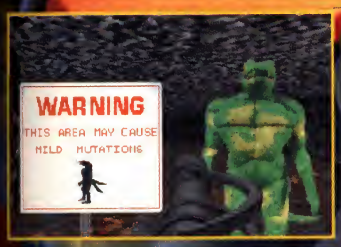
The overriding impression is that the developers have taken a lot of time and effort to give the game a sense of pace and real player involvement. If you fail to accomplish a basic task or mission, destroy enough enemy ships or gain some vital piece of information, you're in trouble, and in this sense it provides the player with a great sense of purpose.

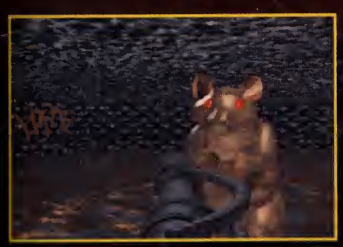
If this is an indication of things to come from the new multimedia revolution, then "What ho Bertie!" Sierra might just have cracked it.

(Right) In true "interactive movie" tradition all the actors have been taken from the "What Camera's On?" School of Acting.

THE FORTRESS OF

DR. RADIAKI





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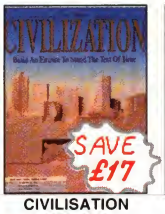

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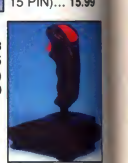

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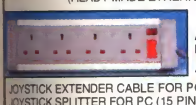

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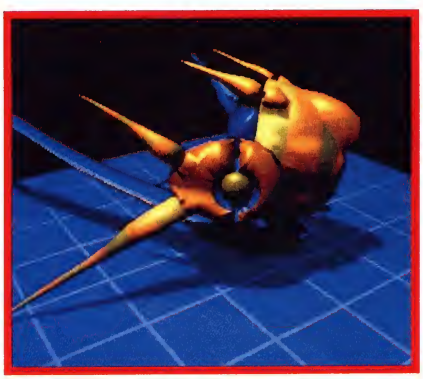
Chaos Control

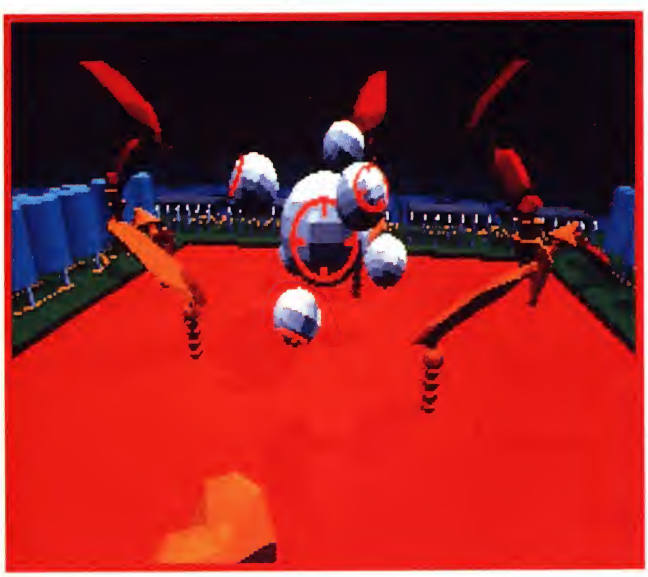
PUBLISHER: Infogrames Multimedia | PRICE: tba (CD)
TELEPHONE: 071 738 8199 | RELEASE DATE: April '95

When's a shoot-'em-up not just a shoot-'em-up? When it's French and a man called Frank's done it, that's when. Jeremy Wells casts a bulging eye over what promises to be the shoot-'em-up of the century due for release early next year, some three years and approximately 45,000 foul-smelling French cigarettes later.



THERE'S A LARGE BROWN PATCH of nicotine-stained ceiling above game developer/programmer/Manga addict Frank Drevon's head, and just like the contents of the *Blue Peter* cat litter tray, it's getting bigger, browner and thicker. In fact, it's almost as big as the one above our Production Editor's desk. Not that it worries Frank at all. He's proud of it. Deep within the corridors that house the hub of Infogrames' development just outside Lyon, the bigger the brown patch above your head, the slower you take the stairs, but the better your game is.

(Below) It ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it, and that's what makes *Chaos Control* special.



Absolute Chaos

Chaos Control has been something of a labour of love for Frank. When, almost three years ago, he actually sat down and started work on it, he had a white ceiling, approximately four million sketches and the desire to create the ultimate shoot-'em. Now it's almost complete, Frank's furiously polishing the Silicon Graphics until he can see his face in them, whilst they MPEG it all to make it run smoother. To say that Frank's well chuffed with *Chaos Control* would be a bit of an understatement to say the least – as far as shoot-'em-ups go, it's got the lot. Fab real-time graphics, stereo sound track, Silicon Graphics arcade sequences, three different flight modes each with their own features, oodles of full-screen 3D and cinematic sequences and speech. If you're a Manga fan, you won't be disappointed. Frank's drawn a lot of inspiration from the Manga and Anime scenes and as a result, the whole look and atmosphere of the game is first class. Characters ooze personality, the ships look absolutely awesome whilst the player environment is dark, mysterious and absolutely stunning to look at. *Chaos Control* is the latest super model on the catwalk – it's got longer legs than Naomi, whiter teeth than Claudia and more curves than Cindy. It just doesn't get much better than this. Not yet anyway.

> "It's got longer legs than Naomi, whiter teeth than Claudia and more curves than Cindy."

First You Take Manhattan

And the plot? Well, like just about every other sci-fi shoot-'em-up, you've got to blow up/destroy/infiltrate the enemy base/planet/mother ship and save the world/your people/planet. Nothing new here, but it's the way it's done in *Chaos Control* that makes it special. You must take out various enemy ships/installations, flying one of three ships over various worlds/planets/motherships. You play the part of First Lieutenant Jessica Darkhill, leader of the Ares Interception Squads. You lead your rebels against the evil Kesh Rhan. Battle zones are detailed and range from a futuristic Manhattan city scape to the Red Planet and finally the Kesh Rhan mothership.

Whose Linear Is It Anyway?

Yes, we all know that a shoot-'em-up is just a shoot-'em-up and when you strip away all the fancy graphics, cinematic sequences and sound you are left with a glorified *Galaxians*, but so what? People like shoot-'em-ups and *Chaos Control* is about as good they get. It may be linear, but then so are all shoot-'em-ups. What's important is that it looks stunning, there's plenty to do and anyone can play – no 40-page manual to read, or a plot from an H.P. Lovecraft novel to wade through. Sit down, plug in and prepare to be amazed.

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Descent

PUBLISHER: Interplay | PRICE: Tba

TELEPHONE: 0235 821666 | RELEASE DATE: November

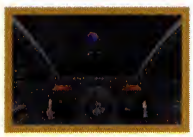
"Well, you have to zip through loads of tunnel-like passages avoiding all types of nasties, get to the epicentre and blast your way in." Sounds like a job for Siddy Sperm... Sadly, he wasn't available, so Jeremy Wells got the job.

The new local lighting system and fully-rendered, texture-mapped backgrounds make the game positively drip with atmostphere.

WHEN IT WAS debuted at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago earlier this year, you had to fight your way to get to see the monitor, let alone play it. *Doom 2* was months away, a faint glimmer of sun nestling over a *Doom*-clone encrusted horizon and everyone was hungry for more. *Descent* fitted the bill perfectly: it was fast, texture-mapped, very easy to get into and you could even look up and down. At last, a *Doom* clone that at least had the potential to go a stage further.

A star is born

So, it's like *Doom*, so what's new? Well, it's more of a slippery fish than a trundling troll. Unlike just about every other 3D shoot-'em-up of this ilk (i.e. *Wolfenstein, Corridor 7* – and yes, *Doom*) that has you as marching marine masochist, armed with shotgun/machine gun/pulsar laser, you pilot an Israeli-made Syssx PyroGX fighter craft equipped with 20 Syssx AV42 "Avenger" missiles and a pair of illegally modified AG435 industrial argon-cyanide lasers.



The nasties are very nasty, morphing into horribles (one up from nasties) as the game progresses.

So what's the deal? Well, the year is 2169 and your provider/employer, PostTerran Minerals Corporation, is under a vicious surprise attack. You are their best Material Defender pilot (of course), but this time you're up against one tough cookie. There's something out there – nobody knows what it is, but it ain't Sooty and Sweep on vacation. It's already attacked and captured PTMC's lucrative mining operations on Pluto and expanded its powerbase rapidly; capturing more mines every day. Now it's heading towards Earth, and things look pretty crappy for humankind.

> "If Descent is going to do itself justice, developer Parallax should make it easier to control."

Worse still, you work for the biggest bureaucracy in history – this place has got more red tape than you need to make that sad *Blue Peter* mobile thingy. Your instructions are a self-conflicting jumble of terse orders. Your primary objective is to destroy the mines, but you are also ordered to rescue any survivors (whatta sweetie!) Additionally, your orders require you to wipe out the hordes of enemy robots and stop them from reaching Earth at all costs.

It's a dirty job...

However, it's not all bad. Some replacement weapons have been smuggled into some of the mines, and as far as your intelligence reports go, the enemy don't know your exact whereabouts so you've at least got the initiative. You are advised, however, that once you enter a mine, you can expect "It" to become aware of your presence and take every action to make your mission a failure.

The aliens have established sensitive control centres, deep within each mine (as they do). If you can find them, you must destroy them using your missiles and get out of the mine before it self-destructs. Completing a mission successfully will earn recognition beyond your wildest dreams and the chance to go in and do it all again – if "It" hasn't reached Earth yet!

A-Mazing!!!

The developers at Parallax (comprising the guys who brought us *Microsoft Flight Simulator, Car & Driver* and *Ultima Underworld I & II*) have concentrated on making the game engine as fast and flexible as possible. For starters, it incorporates a six-degree-of-freedom, texture-mapped

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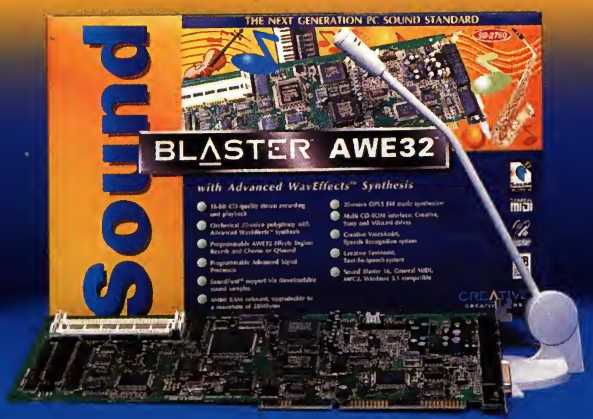

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(Left) Something nasty has attacked PTMC's mining operations on Pluto – it's up to you to find it and blast it.

(Above) Lack of cockpit indicators means your craft might be armed to the teeth, but it's a bastard to control.

☞graphics engine and a revolutionary, new local lighting system to give the feeling of total immersion and depth. It also features fully-rendered, texture-mapped backgrounds, animated wall designs (spinning air-fans, flashing control panels and rotating beacons), as well as action-linked, digitally sampled sound effects and morphing nasties.

This translates into a very intense and graphic player environment that gives a great sense of freedom and control whilst at the same time being quite claustrophobic. As a result it absolutely drips atmosphere, like the slime oozing down the dank (and no doubt smelly) mine walls. The clever use of hundreds of texture maps (including glowing uranium rocks, graffiti-painted walls and moving access doors and ladders) turns what is in essence a simple 3D-maze/shoot-'em-up into a true action blaster that looks better than any 2.5 D tunnel trotter you've ever seen.

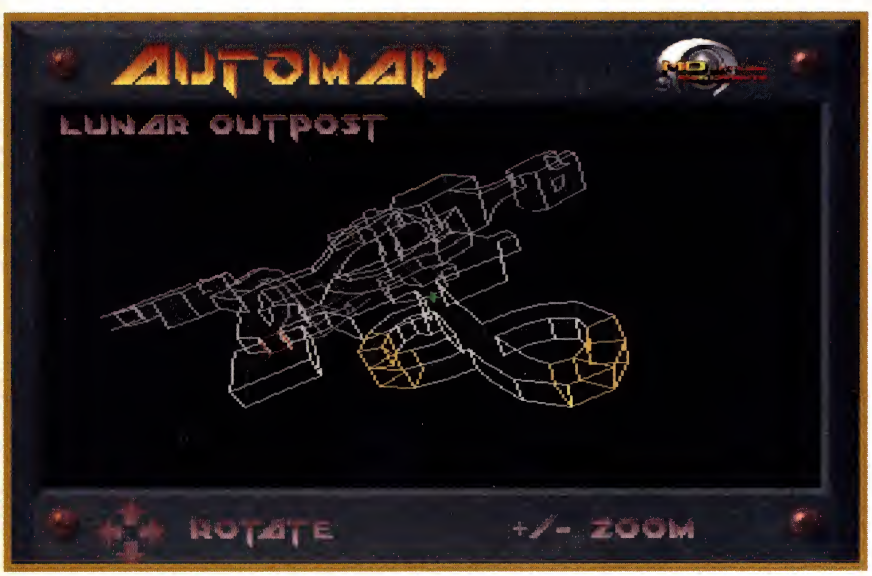
Control freaky

And so to the control system (ahem). Again, Parallax have tried to make it as "instinctive", "intuitive" and "obvious" as possible. Top marks for effort, but when it comes to results the report card would without a doubt read "could do better". Players can either opt to use joystick and keyboard, mouse and keyboard or just the keyboard. It's also Thrustmaster compatible so you don't (in theory) have to use the keyboard at all, but in terms of simplicity it's akin to "death by twisted fingers".

It's not that there are thousands of keys to cram over, just the cut and thrust speed of it all. Certainly, your Syssx PyroGX can duck, dive, hover, pitch, roll, scroll left and right, making it one of the most controllable ships imaginable. The only problem is that it's an absolutely swine to control at any kind of speed, especially when being hotly pursued and blasted at by numerous unfriendlies. The lack of cockpit instrumentation doesn't help either: there are no indicators of pitch and roll, altitude and swing, making it very difficult to establish which way up you are and where you're flying, especially in some of the darker mines. As a result it's very easy to get lost or trapped in a corner wondering what the hell's going on. Performance (as they say) does improve with use, but if *Descent* is going to do itself justice, Parallax really should consider making it a little easier to control.

Apart from that, however, *Descent* is amazing. It's fast, fluid, beautifully rendered and very atmospheric. Even the sound seems to come at you from all angles – definitely a game to whack up the bass and stretch that super woofer! It's also refreshingly difficult: the nasties are very nasty indeed and get even nastier as the game progresses, morphing into "horribles" (one up from nasties) and "learning" strategies based upon previous encounters, making this more than your average shoot-'em-up.

There are also going to be over 30 levels to complete, VR compatibility and even a four-player network option. *Descent* is in may respects what *Doom 2* should have been. PCZ



(Left) Use the Automap facility to plan your attack and get the jump on 'It'.

(Right) At your fingertips – an Israeli-made Syssx PyroGX fighter equipped with 20 Syssx AV42 Avenger missiles and a pair of illegally modified AG435 industrial argo-cyanide lasers. No need to shout 'boo!' here.

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Dungeon Master II
The Legend of SkullKeep

PUBLISHER: Interplay	PRICE: Tba
TELEPHONE: 0235 821666	RELEASE DATE: January

Dungeon Master is arguably one of the best RPGs ever created. Commanding more respect than any other, the sequel has been a very long time coming. John Davison takes a sneaky look at what's in store.

SET SOME 200 YEARS after the original game, *DMII* deals with a time where magick (with a 'k' for some reason) is more widespread than ever. As time has progressed since the period of Chaos, man has blended the art of magick with technology to develop... you guessed it – Techmagick. The secret behind this new art lay in the discovery of mana (the stuff in *Magic Carpet* and a squillion AD&D games) which is the energy that powers magick, and the fact that it can be employed to make objects take on a small amount of intelligence. The crowning achievement of Techmagick, though, is the Zo Link, an immense machine that can amplify mana to cast magic that can transport things through both time and space. The machine, and the keep that encloses it, took more than 50 years to build and the immense power that it created was the cause of much horror...

SkullKeep

As the game begins you learn that the mana machine at SkullKeep was first switched on more than 100 years ago. The effects of its use were apparently so intense that it had to be partially dismantled soon afterwards. The keep itself has now been totally sealed off and there are rumours of death and horror within... rumours based partly on fact, but used mostly to deter any would-be plunderers from entering the keep. All that remains as far as knowledge of the machine goes is that it opened up a gateway into the Void... an unspeakable place where nothing but evil dwells.

...And that's the background to the game. Your role (at first) is simply that of an armed guard keeping watch over Skullkeep. The job is both dull and boring - mainly due to the fact that the whole place has been sealed for decades and it is in one of the most desolate places in the land. Strangely enough though, soon after you begin the game, an enormous amount of activity is detected within the keep and your job is to go in and find out what's going on – and then stop it.

(Below) The graphics in DMII are very different to what we expect in a modern RPG – but hey! Graphics aren't everything... no, c'mon, looks aren't everything.

More Dungeon Master?

As you can see from the screen shots, as far as the graphics go, *DMII* looks very similar indeed to its predecessor. It uses plain and simple graphics - although they are displayed in 256 colours this time as opposed to 16 - and the good old fashioned 'step-scroll' system that made the original so fast to play. None of your poncey 3D *Ultima Underworld*-y bits here. Oh no siree mateybobs. However, the similarities between this and the first game pretty much end with the cosmetics. As far as the guts of the thing goes, it's a very different beast this time around.

For a start (and this is the reason that it's taken four years for the developers to get the thing finished) it uses some of the most advanced artificial intelligence (AI) ever employed in a computer game. All of the adversaries are 'individuals' as it were and roam around the environment with a certain degree of purpose. Give one a bit of a whack and he'll run away with his tail between his legs, but once he's had time to heal he'll be back, and he'll be pissed off.

> "Whack an adversary and he'll run off with his tail between his legs. But he'll be back and he'll be pissed off."

Once you've got a few of these roaming around the game you'll find yourself being chased, trapped and generally stitched up by the bad guys.

(Right) The main new graphic enhancement is that all images are now presented in 256-colour VGA rather than 16 colours.

The other big difference this time is that the action doesn't all take place in dungeons. One of the very few criticisms that players had of *DM* was that the scenery was pretty much the same throughout – even the add-on 'sequel' *Chaos Strikes Back* was very similar graphically. *DMII* brings us lots of new environments, and (thankfully) it also allows the player to roam around 'outside'. There are villages and forests to explore and the effect which they manage to produce really adds to the atmosphere of the game.

To be very honest...

Now then... at the risk of being a bit controversial here, I must say that *Dungeon Master II* is one of those games that won't appeal to everyone. The original game inspired thousands of people to get into role playing and it had a die-hard core of fans who won't hear a bad thing said about it. True, in its time it was the best RPG ever. Even now it stands up against the competition, but people who have got into CRPGs in the past couple of years will be in for a shock. The main reason for this is the way that the game is presented. The fact that it doesn't have silky smooth scrolly bits, the fact that the graphics do look fairly simplistic and the fact that the control system is so simple... these are all elements which will take some getting used to.

"DMII uses some of the most advanced artificial intelligence ever employed in a computer game."

If you love role playing though, this will be a game to get your hands on. It's extremely well scripted, is reputedly *enormous*, and most importantly it employs an AI system which makes it more akin to playing against 'real' characters than any other game yet developed. It's all in the gameplay you see... role playing isn't just about pretty graphics - it's the way that player and adversary interact and how the puzzles are structured, and these are two areas where *DMII* will really wipe the floor with everything. Watch for a review in the February issue of *PC Zone*.

(Above Oh no! It's a big horrible scary monster... quick, run away, run away

(Left) Oh no! The big horrible scary monster has got even bigger and more horrible and scarier and monsterier...

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MICROSOFT WINDOWS

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CREATIVE LABS

Games reviews are what *PC ZONE* is all about, and over the next 60 or so pages you'll find loads! All games receive an overall mark out of 100 and are scored according to the following guidelines:

90+ (PCZONE Classic)
Highly-original idea, expertly executed, utterly flawless in all departments and oozing long-term playability.

80-89 (PCZONE Recommended)
High degree of originality and extremely well executed in all but one department.

70-79
Strong idea and well executed, though not necessarily very original. Weaknesses do not impair playability and it has a reasonably long life.

60-69
Adequate. Games falling into the "If you like this style of game you'll like this, if not you won't" category.

50-59
Seen it all before. Take it or leave it. Not a terrible game, but definately not exactly fab either.

40-49
Dodgy but playable (probably only once).

39 & Below
Seriously weak – avoid at all costs!

Specs Box
Check out the Specs Box for a guideline as to what memory, graphic and sound support you will need to run the game, and if you're still not sure what we're on about the In Perspective box should give you an idea as to how the game compares with others of its genre.

WHAT'S IN OUR DISK CADDIES?

Some PC games get played, others get nicked, some get binned. Here's what's on our hardrives/in our disk caddies this month:

- Magic Carpet
- Creature Shock
- Discworld
- Little Big Adventure
- Quarantine
- Formula One Grand Prix

56 DISCWORLD
63 ALL NEW ... LEMMINGS
66 CYBERWAR
68 POWER DRIVE
71 NOVA STORM
75 DARK SUN II
78 US NAVY FIGHTERS
84 ARMORED FIST
90 QUARANTINE
94 ACES OF THE DEEP
98 WARCRAFT
100 KLIK 'N' PLAY
106 CREATURE SHOCK
109 FRONT PAGE BASEBALL
110 LODE RUNNER
117 RETRIBUTION

And verily, the great Gods of the Disc did decree that an official Discworld game should be released by the great Nosis of Psyg. John Davison hath decreed that it is good.

TERRY *Pratchett* books are one of the few things in life that you can strike up a conversation with anyone about. Imagine the scenario: you're down the pub with some people that you don't know very well, and the most terrible thing in the world has happened. The conversation has dried up and someone has already used the current favourite: "Have you seen *Pulp Fiction* yet?". Horror scenario. What do you talk about? "Have you read the new Pratchett book?" is certainly something that has potential. There are few authors (especially British) who command such widespread appeal and chances are everyone has a strong opinion about Pratchett's work.

To say that the "officially approved" game based on the Discworld series is one of the most eagerly anticipated adventure games since *Monkey Island 2* would probably be an understatement. There are people who are quite literally drooling at the prospect but, unfortunately, there are also fears about how close the game will be to the books. What if the developers do a *Lord Of The Rings* on us and produce something that doesn't match our expectations? What if the characters don't look or act the way we expect them to? Wouldn't that be awful?

DISCWORLD

Fortunately, thanks to the intervention of Mr P himself, the chances of this being the case are pretty remote. Having spent considerable time with the game, I can safely say that this is one of the best adaptations of a work of fiction I have ever come across.

All the characters behave in a way that I'd expect them to (and I've read a fair number of Pratchett books in my time) and even the voices seem spot on.

It's a big one

It was a foregone conclusion that it was going to be a point and click adventure. What else could capture the spirit and style of the Discworld environment? Teeny Weeny Games has worked hard creating an accurate representation of the world and all its inhabitants. Working with Terry and collaborator Stephen Briggs (the chap who assisted with the recently published *Discworld Companion*), the team have created something which not only captures the essence of the description found in the books, but also manages to blend it with an artistic style that is not dissimilar to the excellent Josh Kirby artwork used on the book covers (and the cover of this issue).

"The variety of characterisations and the wit with which the characters are played are truly superb."

As far as scale goes, this certainly appears to be a biggie. The guys at Teeny Weeny swear blind that it will take more than 100 hours to complete and, as far as numbers of locations and puzzles go, it's about three times the size of a typical LucasArts game. So, if you finished *Day Of The Tentacle* reasonably quickly, this one's for you. Couple this sheer immensity with the fact that it has some absolutely blinding puzzles, and I'm sure that an average player will find that 100 hours is a pretty conservative estimate.

While I'm on the subject of puzzles, I feel that this is something worth dwelling on for a while. You know that really satisfied feeling you get when you've sussed a sequence of problems and you finally achieve something? Well, *Discworld* is so chock-full of puzzle sequences that you seem to have that sense of satisfaction throughout most of the game. I don't want to give too much away, but the gameplay structure is not only very involving, but it's also inspired. There are puzzles and sequences mercilessly pinched from all manner of sources, including a particularly amusing Indiana Jones scene – I won't spoil things by telling you what is involved, but the effects are hilarious. The overall feel of the game gives you the impression of having a purpose pretty much all the time. There's very little meandering around doing nothing.

Puzzle sequences in many adventures are simply a case of performing a certain action with a particular object to create the desired effect. But a typical puzzle sequence in *Discworld* is quite different, demanding a series of events to take place which, in turn, develop the player's situation within a scenario. Only once all the elements are in place can you achieve your goal. In effect, many of the larger puzzles are almost like mini quests which ☞

(Above) Recognise this scene? Remember the bit at the beginning of *Indiana Jones* with the statue and the bag of sand?

(Below) The sewage worker (played by Tony Robinson) fiddles with his finely tuned machine.

(Left) The artwork for the characters and some of the more bizarre objects in the game is absolutely fabulous.

(Left) The Ladies of Negotiable Affection are the centre of one of the more amusing parts of the game.

(Below) Novice monks feel the suspense of Pass the Parcel.

☞ involve a series of simple, less important puzzles to be solved. The net result is that you always feel as though you are working towards something.

The story of the game is divided into three separate acts which all involve our heroes, Rincewind and the ever-present luggage, with a central theme running throughout the entire game. The basic idea is that a dragon has been set loose (remember, dragons only exist if you believe in them – a vitally important theme in the game) and Rincewind has to get rid of it. Obviously, it's not that simple, but without completely ruining the whole plot, that's about as much as I can tell you.

The control system

One of the biggest problems we've had with British-developed adventures over the years is that, more often than not, they pale into insignificance next to the stuff that comes from LucasArts. One of the main reasons for this is that Lucas has SCUMM, its intelligent user interface, which the rest of the world is still trying to match while not obviously copying it. Fortunately, things are changing and the system developed for *Discworld* is one of the best interfaces I've come across, rivalling even the superb system that appeared in *Sam & Max*.

Apart from the fact that the game employs a superb intelligent cursor which dispenses with the tedious process of trying to interact with things that don't want to be interacted with, it also makes use of a unique windowing system. Whereas most games either have your inventory on screen at all times (*Monkey Island*) or as a separate screen (*Sam & Max*, *Gabriel Knight*), *Discworld* employs a unique window which pops up whenever you click on either Rincewind or the luggage. This window can be moved anywhere on screen and can also be resized to anything from full-screen to teeny weeny (ahem... sorry). Objects can then simply be picked up from the inventory and dragged into the main playing area in true Windows style. After spending some time with this system, you'll wonder why no-one has ever thought of it before.

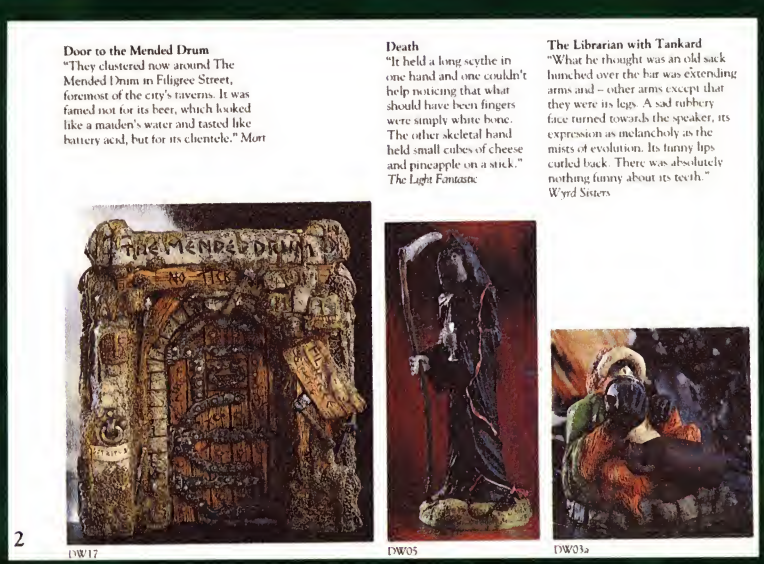
The dawn of the talkie

The initial launch of *Discworld* will be on CD as opposed to floppy, which is understandable when you consider the amount of production work that has gone into the project. While the game is one of the best point-and-click adventures as a standalone product, it really comes into its own when you hear the sound.

It's no secret that Psygnosis and Teeny Weeny have invested an awful lot of time and money in creating one of the best aural experiences so far in a computer game. And when you consider some of the talent used, it's obvious that this is going to be something special. With ex-*Monty Python* and all-round good egg Eric Idle playing the part of Rincewind the wizard and the remaining 77 characters all acted by voice talents like Kate Robbins (of *Spitting Image* fame), Rob Brydon (one of the UK's hottest up-and-coming voice talents) along with Tony Robinson and Jon Pertwee, it's safe to say that this is an extremely

Next Month

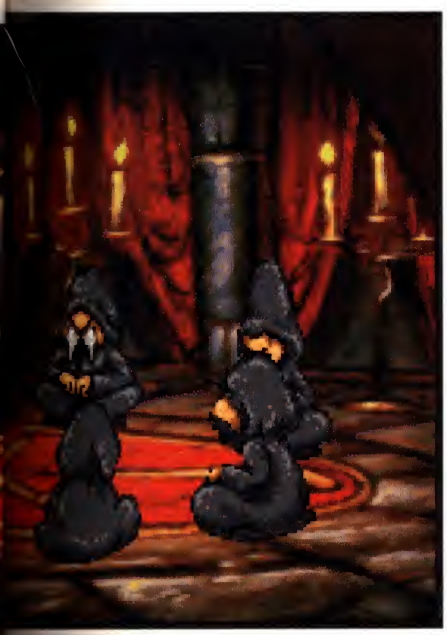
To celebrate the impending launch of the game (which we're assured will be in mid-January) Psygnosis has kindly let us plunder the supplies of *Discworld* merchandise, and next month we'll be bringing you an awesome competition. Not only will we have a selection of the Clarecraft models, but we'll also have copies of the game and signed books to give away. Watch this space.



(Right) Climbing onto the top bunk is hard when you have a body shaped like an ice-cream cornet.

(Below) The dining hall at the Unseen University is full of interesting characters.

(Below) The angry monk is one of the real 'pain in the arse' characters in the game, and can be dealt with using an application of Chaos Theory (something about butterflies and rainstorms).



professional sounding project. While previous "talkie" games have been of a good quality – although many of them have sounded simply like a bunch of people sitting around talking along to a game– *Discworld* is different. The quality of the voices and the talent of the actors used has produced something more akin to a radio play rather than a simple voice-over for a game. The variety of characterisations and the wit with which the characters are played are truly superb.

But is it really Discworld?

Okay, so the production is fantastic and it's a bloody good adventure game, but does it really capture the spirit of the books? People will buy it on its strengths as a game, but chances are there are more people who will want it simply because it's a Pratchett game.

To be frank, I must admit that they've done a bloody good job Pratchett-wise. The humour is in style, the use of voice is inspired and, most importantly, the game draws inspiration from the whole series of books. All the locations you've read about are there, as are most of the characters and many of the situations. It's definitely one of those games that has you jumping up and down and going "Ooh, ooh, yes... that's that bit from... er, you know..." Many of the scenarios are recognisable, but situations aren't duplicated from the books. Thankfully, there are very few moments in the game where just a sound knowledge of the novels will see you through. Teeny Weeny hasn't fallen into that trap.

The end bit...

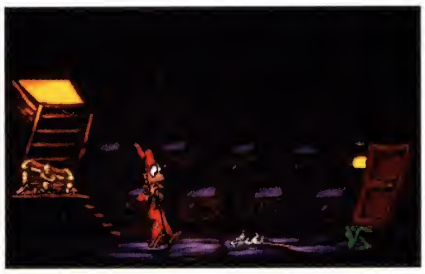
It's not often that a game comes along that is brilliantly scripted, well executed and superbly produced. *Discworld* is such a game. The artwork throughout is of an extremely high quality, the characters are all drawn in a convincing cartoon style (in places they are reminiscent of the characters from *Asterix)* and the voice acting is brilliant.

To be honest, I can't really find many faults with this game. Obviously, if you don't like Pratchett, you won't really be into the humour, but if you don't at least snigger at some of the gags, you either don't have a sense of humour or have recently died.

The overall quality of this is almost certainly down to the fact that such a wide range of talent has been employed. The project has been overseen by Terry Pratchett himself, Teeny Weeny has made use of its best artists, musicians and programmers, and the actors used are all seasoned professionals. Not only is this a superb game in its own right, but it will be something to which future talkie-adventures will be compared.

(Above) The game begins with Rincewind snoozing in bed. The first puzzle is how to get the luggage off the top of the wardrobe.

(Right) Hi-ho, hi-ho...



96

SCORE

Discworld is possibly the best point-and-click adventure game ever made.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb
Minimum Processor: 386
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: All Major sound cards
Controls: Mouse
Price: £49.99 **Release Date:** January 1995
Publisher: Psygnosis **Tel:** 051 709 5755

The E-mail interview

TERRY Terry

Always at the forefront of new technology, *PC Zone* brings you the first in an occasional series of innovative interviews. To begin with, Paul Presley joins leading fantasy author Terry Pratchett on the digital highway.

BEFORE I START, I should briefly explain what an "E-mail interview" is and how it differs from the usual one-on-one affairs. E-mail has been widely touted in the press as the "Next Big Thing". Anyone with a computer and a modem can gain access to an electronic mailbox and receive letters, text and graphics from people around the world, without having to worry about those annoying little things like finding a stamp, cutting your tongue while licking the envelope and picking bits of your postman's trousers out from between your dog's teeth. Mail is received the very instant you send it, and you can often find yourself receiving replies within hours (sometimes just minutes) instead of after the next postal strike is resolved.

> "...the Americans said 'they didn't think the American public was ready for Death as an amusing and sympathetic character.'"

So what is an "E-mail interview"? Well, it's exactly what it sounds like. We get in touch with the interviewee, get their E-mail address and post a question. We receive a reply and we post our response. This questioning and replying continues until we've got all the information we need (or BT cut off our phone lines for not paying the bill). It's essentially interviewing by mail.

Now you're probably thinking, "Well that *is* great. Cutting-edge technology and all that. I can't see how this interview look any different to a normal one?" Well, that's the point. It doesn't. And nor should it. From a design point of view it should look just like any other interview, but the actual difference lies in the content. Because the interviewee isn't sitting directly opposite the interviewer, he or she has a lot more time to think about his/her reply, resulting (usually) in a more intelligent, honest and thought-provoking response. This also provides us with more time to consider our next question, thereby allowing us to properly analyse what has been said and to shape our line of questioning accordingly. In the end this means that, hopefully, we get a much deeper, and more interesting, interview to read which provides greater insight. There are also other benefits from our point of view but they're mostly all time-related.

We hope you enjoy it. Please write in and let us know what you think, either on the idea as a whole or on some of the points raised by our subjects. For the meantime, let the questioning begin:

PC Zone (PCZ): *Let's start with some history. Your "Author's Biography" says that before you started writing you worked for a number of nuclear power stations. It seems like quite a jump from that to the* Discworld *novels. How did it come about?*

Terry Pratchett (TP): I don't think it's that amazing. I had a job as a Press Officer for what was then the CEGB. There were four nuclear power stations on my patch (and lots of other sorts, but they seldom made the news). And in my spare time I wrote. Within a couple of years of *The Colour of Magic* coming out it was obvious to me that I was losing money by going to work every day, and I quit. Quite amicably, really. I don't see it as being uniquely odd. I mean, you might just as well say it's a big jump from being a greengrocer to writing fantasy. It's probably a bigger jump than it is from being a nuclear Press Officer, anyway.

PCZ: *Your most recent books* Only You Can Save Mankind *and* Johnny and the Dead, *as well as the* Truckers *series, appear to be targeted at a younger audience. Do you see yourself continuing in this direction or are you just experimenting with different styles now that the* Discworld *is behind you?*

TP: I've never said the *Discworld* is behind me! I *have* said it'll probably slow down a bit. I'm not sure I have different styles – it's all my style, but with different types of spin to it.

PCZ: *You're one of the few authors, certainly British authors, to inspire so many spin-offs, from miniature figures to an A-Z guide to the city of Ankh-Morpork. Of course there is one area that seems to be missing. We've had the* Truckers *animated series, does this mean that films are far behind?*

TP: Mind you, once you've said the map and the figures, what else can you think of? The occasional promotional T-shirt, the *Unseen University Scarf* Stephen Briggs did as a joke (the poor bloke ended up flogging 100s of them at what turned out to be a rather low price)... that's about it. It's all been more or less under my control, at least so far as the look of things is concerned.

Three separate UK organisations want to do *Discworld* (filmed) stuff. Something may happen. I'm a lot more confident that *Johnny and the Dead* will be made. That looks very promising. Big screen films... no. There's a lot of low-key interest but most of it is from Hollywood low-lifes who just want to buy the rights because they're a "property". There are so many onanists in the film business that it's not true.

PCZ: *I had heard (although I don't know how true it is) that someone once wanted to buy the film rights to either* Reaper Man *or* Mort, *but then wanted to change the character of Death. Is that true?*

TP: Not exactly, but there was a deal coming together and it all looked promising, and then the Americans said, "...they didn't think the American public was ready for Death as an amusing and sympathetic character," and wanted it rewritten. This was about 18 months before *Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey*. No one in movies knows anything. If they're right, it's by accident.

PCZ: *Yeah, that seems to be the general authors' view of film-makers. But how do you see this "new age" of technology affecting the way you do your job? Is "Terry Pratchett the Author" going to become "Terry Pratchett the Interactive Storyteller"?*

TP: Careful... you're on dangerous ground. What is more interactive than a book? 26 characters and a handful of punctuation, arranged in various orders, but what you get in your head is your private film show.

PCZ: *Am I to take it then that all this talk of super highways and CD-ROMs killing off the printed word doesn't scare you?*

TP: No. 90 per cent of that stuff is media hype anyway. It's for Mondo 2000-types who couldn't read if you cut their index finger off. The people who gleefully talk about the death of the printed word are the ones who don't read it in the first place because they find it too difficult and it isn't cool.

I like computers. I like games. But if you lose sight of the fact that there's a real reality out there, you're going to end up in big trouble.

PCZ: *Most authors usually have a specific goal to achieve before they start; an underlying message they want to put across. Are there things you've been attempting to say throughout your books or*

Pratchett

have you simply been setting out to write entertaining stories?

TP: There's nothing "simply" about writing entertaining stories. If that's *all* an author manages to do, he or she has still done a fair amount. I'd certainly trust an author who set out to entertain far more than I would an author who set out with some high moral purpose. I write the books because I enjoy doing so. There's an element of "things to say", and an element of "entertainment" – a big one, I hope – and a lot of other stuff, too. I tend to clam up at this point.

PCZ: *I've read that you are quite a computer games fan. Had you never considered bringing the* Discworld *series to this medium before?*

TP: There was a game based on *The Colour of Magic* that came out in the late 80s. It was written by Fergus McNeill of Delta 4, was text only, and was published by a very short-lived computer games arm of Macmillans. I think they were a bit out of date and thought it was still 1983, where you didn't have to try to market games and you could make huge sums without effort. It earned out its advance and vanished without trace. It wasn't a bad game of its kind. Since then I've been nervy about game approaches – both electronic and straight RPG – because I learned from that experience that a good idea isn't enough. If you can't market the thing, it fails.

PCZ: *It isn't just marketing that can spoil a game though, is it? Like a lot of authors, you must be protective of your work. How wary are you of allowing someone else to interpret – and potentially, ruin – your ideas?*

TP: No, you're right, it's not just marketing, but that's a critical aspect. It's no good producing a great game that doesn't get into the shops because some twerp has done something wrong.

I am quite wary (regarding the interpretation of my work), but I think the TWG/Psygnosis game has the right "voice". It's a fun thing which has a lot of the feel of the early Rincewind books. I'm far more nervy of RPGs. I'd much prefer that fans make up their own games than there be an "official" *Discworld* game.

PCZ: *How true, in your eyes, is the game to the books? The reason I ask is that humour has proved to be deceptively tricky to get across in computer games (only LucasArts really seem to get it right) and obviously a large part of the* Discworld *humour is literary-based.*

TP: Well, look, it's a *game*. It can't be a book. Like I said before, it's got the feel of the early books, but it's based in the *Discworld* rather than being a *Discworld* story in its own right.

PCZ: *So what was your role in the game's creation?*

TP: Mainly to say, "Sure, go ahead". They've been pretty good at not getting things wrong, so I haven't had to shout at them too much.

PCZ: *From your personal point of view, how important is the game? Is it just another piece of merchandising with your name on it, or will you gain something important by it?*

TP: Hmm. Well, I don't feel magically fulfilled because there's going to be a game, I'm just happy that it's going well. If people like it, that's great. I hope they do.

Come to that, I don't think of stuff like the figures and the game as merchandising, although I know that's what they technically are. I suppose it's because the term is often used to mean "rubbish with no intrinsic value, but with a name attached", and I hope that's not the case here.

PCZ: *Looking at the project with hindsight, or perhaps even thinking about the future, do you feel as though you might like to have been more involved with it? Maybe scripting a complete story yourself and experimenting with the medium more fully?*

TP: I'd say I've already had far more involvement than many authors have had. I've done as much as I want to do. I don't think I'd find any computer game as satisfying to do as a novel, though. A man should know his limitations.

PCZ: *Does this mean you don't have any ambitions beyond writing?*

TP: What do you mean "beyond"? I'm a so-so artist, I can't play a musical instrument, I can't program in anything other than Basic and tiny bits of z80 code, so I'm pretty sure that everyone, including me, would prefer that I endeavoured to be good at what I *can* do rather than make a pig's ear of something else.

PCZ: *What I'm talking about is ambitions rather than specific plans, though. As a journalist you had the ambition to be a successful novelist. You've achieved that. Is there another step you've yet to take?*

TP: To be honest, I never even had an ambition to be a successful novelist. Things just happened. I distrust definite ambitions. I mean, what do you do after you've walked on the moon? Once you're at the top of the mountain you've created, all other directions are down. I do find that I'm developing an interest in the theatre, though. You never know... PCZ

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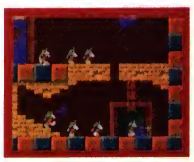
ALL NEW WORLD OF LEMMINGS

Patrick McCarthy's involvement with small furry animals goes back a long way. Longer than we care to remember, actually (especially after the *World In Action* Special). Let's move quickly on.

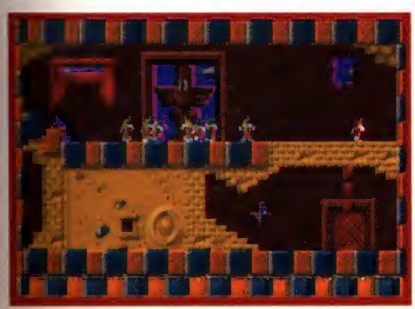
IT WAS with no little excitement that our hero loaded the brand new copy of *All New World Of Lemmings* onto his computer. Was he not, after all, the Clickmeister™? Did not puzzle games quake before the wrath of the LeftButtonKing®©™? When he raised his mouse in anger, did not the very ground quail beneath his feet, the very seas part to admit him, his very cashpoint card allow him to take money out of his current account? Or was he thinking of someone else?



(Above) The cute little furries have mysteriously "got closer" to the screen.

It was, as I was saying, with no little excitement that our hero loaded his copy of *All New World Of Lemmings*. He was particularly interested in the "All New" part. What could those cheeky games designers from north of the border, those Caledonian Conjurers possibly have come up with this time? Do you, perhaps, take command of a lone lemming, trapped in the depths of hell, surrounded by cacodemons and aggressive fruit, with only a lollipop stick and a rubber band to see you through the myriad levels of wanton homicidal frenzy?... Or maybe it's the world's first kamikaze flight sim, and you have to guide your Japanese lemming to his glorious death through a hail of anti-aircraft fire, taking out a destroyer in the process... Or perhaps it will prove to be a one-on-one beat 'em-up in which the winner is the first to lose all the feeling in his limbs. ☞

"Now there's this, which really ought to be called Big Lemmings With Fewer Skills."



All New World Of Lemmings

Not Quite "All New", Then

A cursory glance at the game reveals that it looks remarkably similar to the 2000 previous incarnations, apart from the fact that there are fewer icons and the lemmings seem to be bigger. But what's this? It says in the manual that they're not bigger at all. They're "closer". This may well be a joke, as it has an exclamation mark after it. The whole manual is very light-hearted, as every second sentence seems to have an exclamation mark after it. We laughed. Then we got to the several pages given over to the plot.

The Plot

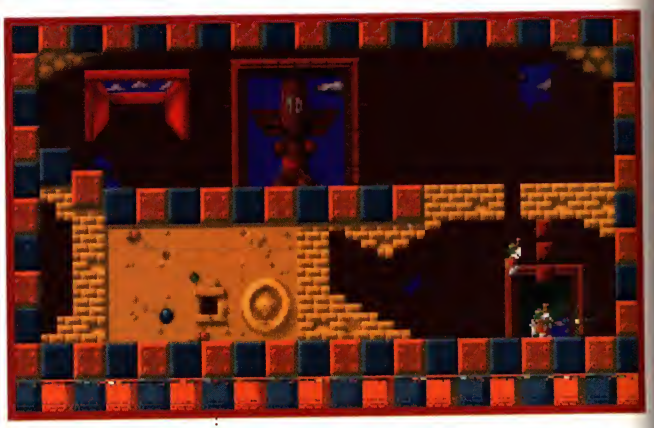
We couldn't be bothered to read it, though. Well, would you? Let's face it, whatever the reasoning behind it, the game's the same as it always has been and always will be. Gasp! – or is it?

Wee-elll...

All right, a few things have been changed. In previous versions the lemmings came piling out of tubes somewhere on screen and walked off at random; you selected a lemming ability from the icons at the bottom of the screen clicked on the lemming of your choice, and that's what it became, instantly, only changing into something else if you clicked on it with another ability, or it met an untimely end.

In this version there are fewer basic skills and the lemming doesn't keep them for the rest of its life – they're more of a transient skill, like when you've had exactly the right number of beers to pull off that trick with the rubber chicken and the cooking oil, then you drink one bottle more and the magic has gone for good (and the chicken with it). It's the same with the not-quite-new lemmings: one minute they're the possessor of a unique and crowd-pleasing talent guaranteed to win them the sexual partner of their choice; the next they're reduced to the ranks, part of the common herd, just another Joe Average. The chief beneficiaries in this, of course, are the blockers, whose only future after being appointed blocker in previous games was to be turned into a bomb and blown all over the screen. Now, they can simply be made into a walker again.

(Below) Ancient Egypt provides the setting for lemming suicidal antics.



The other thing (and this *is* new) is that there are special tool icons – digging, building, presenting breakfast TV, or whatever – dotted about the levels, waiting to be picked up by sweaty lemming paws. Once the lemming has picked it up, it has a certain number of uses of that tool (or skill), which you activate by clicking on the special tool button.

If it dies while in possession of the skill, the skill dies with it. Think of it as the world's sole surviving Peruvian anal flute player, who has expired before being able to hand the tradition down to his offspring.

The lemming can, however, pass the skill on: all it has to do is drop the icon and allow a fellow lemming to pick it up. Thus is the cycle of nature perpetuated and the world is a better place. Not.

The History Of The Lemmings

First there was *Lemmings*, the first, and much imitated, save-'em-up. You had to get a specified number of the dreadlocked, furry, suicidally-inclined but strangely irresistible creatures to the exit of a puzzle-packed level, using the demonically-allocated number of skills made available to you. Then there was *Oh No, More Lemmings* which was exactly the same. Then there was *Christmas Lemmings*, which was exactly the same but with Father Christmas hats. Then came *Lemmings – The Tribes*, which went a bit mad with billions of new skills to use on the different "concept" levels, and lemmings dressed up in silly clothes. Now there's this, which really ought to be called *Big Lemmings With Fewer Skills*. And there's another bloody *Christmas Lemmings* on the way, and apparently, next year, a *New Year Lemmings*, *First Sunday In February Lemmings* and an *Easter Lemmings*, where you finally get to crucify the little sods.

The Other New Idea

Obviously, having all these lemmings dashing about with tools stuffed down their pants gets pretty confusing. Every time you click on the one you think has the skill you need, it turns out to be someone else entirely and the special skill icon shrugs at you insolently. So, to make things a little easier, you can highlight the one you want to keep an eye on by right-clicking on it. It turns a different colour and from that point on, even if it's in the middle of a rioting lemming mob, clicking on the mob will select the highlighted one. Electronic tagging: infringement of liberty, or handy help around the home?

Now read on...

The rest boils down to variations on a theme. Three of the tribes make an appearance in this game: the Egyptians, the Shadows and the Classics. There are 20 of each, with 30 levels for each to get through.

You start the game controlling 10 lemmings, with 10 held in reserve. The idea is to get all 10 to safety on each level this time – or more, if any are trapped in the level when you start it (you're supposed to rescue them). Monsters appear on some levels, which you can shoot if you have the right skill icon; if not, it's lemming pie for tea. Dead lemmings are replaced from the reserve, until you run out and it's all over, you hide your face in shame and retire.

Luckily for those of us who simply can't get enough of the lovable characters and miss the tribes who aren't represented here, we're promised that more data disks are coming. Clearly, Psygnosis are aware of the marketing error made with the last Tribes release, in which all those different elements were put into the same game at the same time, when they could have strung it out over four, five – even six – games if they'd done their jobs properly. Thankfully for us all, they've now seen sense and reverted to accepted practice.

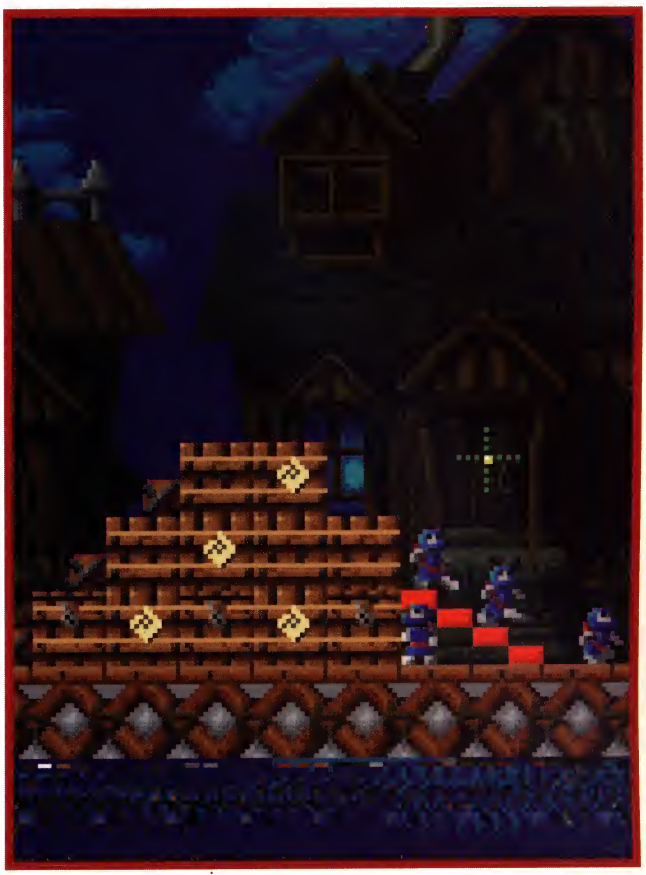
> "Monsters appear on some levels, which you can shoot if you have the right skill icon."

Remote control...

What else can I say? It's *Lemmings*. If you liked all the other *Lemmings* games, you'll no doubt like this one, too. The controls are a little finickier than before, thanks to all that messing about with skills. Clicking on a lemming to use its tool/skill can mean a lot more clicks. If you want to use a builder lemming to bridge over a gap, first,you stop it walking over the edge of the gap by turning it into a blocker; then you right-click on the Use button to make sure the skill, not the picture of the lemming, is the one that's selected; then click on the Walk icon because you can't make it build from a blocking start; , finally, you have to click on the building skill. But for all this faffing about, for all the essentially similar gameplay, it's still *Lemmings*.

I had to interview the chaps from DMA Design about a year ago and I asked them at the time how many more *Lemmings* games they thought they'd be foisting on the public. I tentatively put forward the idea that we might well see something along the lines of *Lemmings 50 – Yet More Bastard Lemmings*, in a few years' time. They seemed to think that as long as people kept buying them, they'd keep making them. So it's your own fault. Z

(Left) This is supposed to be very scary, judging by the large skull hanging from a tree.



(Above) By putting all their eggs in one basket, Psygnosis missed a heaven-sent opportunity for pyramid selling.

78 SCORE

If you like all the other *Lemmings* games, you'll like this one too.

Minimum Memory: 8Mb RAM
Minimum Processor: 486/33
Hard Disk Space Required: 2Mb
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: SoundBlaster
Controls: Mouse
Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** March
Publisher: Digital Integration **Tel:** 0234 567890

(Left) Look at these brilliant graphics. Er, what are they?

It's the sequel to the *Lawnmower Man*. It looks amazing and it sounds fab. Chris Anderson goes in search of the gameplay beneath the gloss.

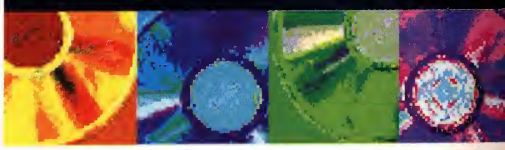
Cyberwar

FOR THOSE OF YOU who are wondering what prompted all those games and movies with people mowing their lawn while wearing extremely suspect dungarees, it's all Stephen King's fault. It was his superb original short story that started it all, but unfortunately the *Lawnmower Man* saga went rapidly downhill after that. The movie was pretty good but strayed too far from the original story-line and consequently was more Hollywood than horror. As for the game, oh dear. The graphics were impressive but way too blocky and the gameplay, er, wasn't there. There were minor puzzles for you not to tax your brain with and arcade sequences in which you occasionally pressed a key (or if you were really lucky, two). *Cyberwar* takes up the story from where the original game left off. Here's a brief recap.

The tale of dopey Jobe

Dr Angelo, an enormously clever scientist, found a way of using virtual reality to stimulate the human brain. Full of enthusiasm, and egged on by all his scientist mates, he decided to experiment on Jobe, a thickie lawnmower person, to see what would happen. Jobe's IQ increased steadily and he developed telepathic powers. Eventually, Jobe went nuts and decided he wanted live in a quiet semi-detached abode inside the world's computer networks. He projected himself into a large computer network and then became Cyberjobe, the most powerful dude ever created. Dr Angelo followed him and, after a gargantuan struggle, Cyberjobe repented, freed the doctor and turned into Mr Nice Guy. In *Cyberwar*, the American military, thinking it would be useful for starting wars and things, make a clone of Cyberjobe which turns into a really nasty piece of work. Dr Angelo finds out and decides to hunt down the Cyberjobe replica. You play Dr Angelo and your objective is to guide him through a virtual world and destroy the Cyberjobe copy. So, the story-line hasn't changed much. What about the game?

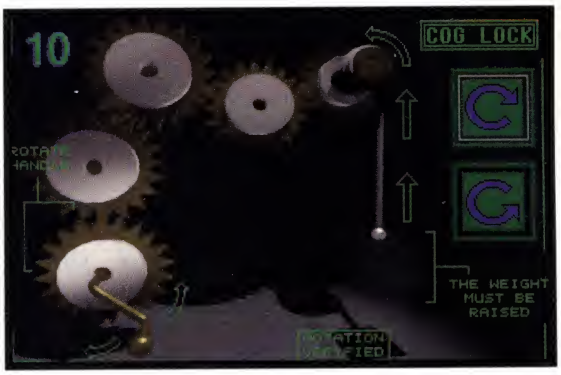
(Above) Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him Horatio. When he started playing Cyberwar he weighed 12 stone – and now look at the poor bugger!



True Stories

This is a conversation overheard during the course of the *Cyberwar* review.

Onlooker 'That looks amazing, doesn't it?'
Chris 'Yes.'
Onlooker 'The graphics are really brilliant, aren't they?'
Chris 'Yes.'
Onlooker 'I mean look at that ship-thing moving around, fab, isn't it?'
Chris (Bloody hell) 'Yes!'
Onlooker 'Can you skip this bit and go on to the game?'
Chris 'This *is* the game. It's me flying that ship.'
Onlooker 'But you're not doing anything.'
Chris 'Yes I am, I'm moving it by pressing arrow keys, look.'
Onlooker 'No you're not, that's a bloody demo.'
Chris 'F***off!'



(Above) What do you get if you cross Lawnmower Man with a Nike trainers advert? Hush Puppies that glow in the dark, stupid.

Cyberbore

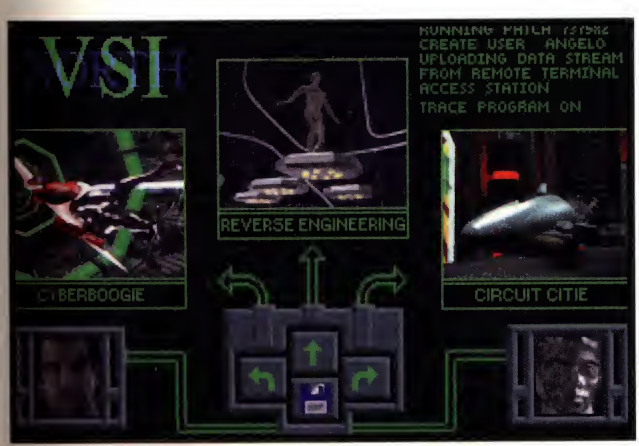
Well, it looks better. The graphics in *Cyberwar* are absolutely stunning. They are still a little blocky when you see them close up, but they are a definite improvement over those in the first game. Unfortunately, the gameplay is exactly the same. There are more puzzles, some of them an absolute cinch and others quite cryptic, and there are more arcade sequences which look like variations on those seen in the first game. The puzzle-solving elements in *Cyberwar* are the closest you'll ever get to real 'gameplay' in the whole game. At least you have to think about them, albeit for only a short time. In total contrast, the arcade sections are at best an insult to your intelligence and at worst, profoundly frustrating.

A prime example of the non-gameplay in the *Cyberwar* arcade sections is a level called Mutation Storage. You are standing in a room and in front of you there are three doors. They open randomly to reveal either a barrel or Bernie, one of Cyberjobe's toughies. Your objective? Shoot Bernie before he shoots you. This does not pose much of a problem because a) Bernie takes an abolute age to come through the door and b) you can't possibly miss him when you shoot. What a challenge, eh?

Cyber Boogie is a level in which you have to jump into a Cybership thing and navigate your way through a series of tunnels, except you don't really get to navigate anything at all. As you fly through the tunnels you use the arrow keys on your keyboard to tell the ship which way to go. For example, if you're coming to a left turn, you press the left arrow and off you go around the corner. You can use a joystick as well if you want but it's so easy it really doesn't make any difference. When you're not deeply engrossed in ascertaining whether the next part of the tunnel will veer up, down, left or right, you simply sit back and watch the pretty graphics. In fact, you do quite a lot of that in this game.

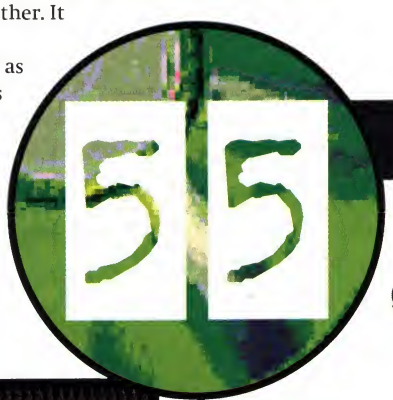
Ninety per cent of your time in the levels (and sometimes more) is spent admiring the scenery and animation of the characters in the game. Just as well, then, that they really are something worth looking at. In the office people were crowding around the PC to get a closer look at the stunning cut-in sequences that link up the game from one level to another. It doesn't do much for the gameplay though, which is as sadly lacking in *Cyberwar* as it was in the first game.

If you're unspeakably rich and money is no object, you might want a copy of this to impress your no doubt equally rich friends with when they come around. Otherwise, avoid it.



(Left) Click on Circuit Citie if you want to find your way around Ikea Brent Park on a Sunday afternoon.

(Above) Watch that door – you might have to give Bernie a bolt before he shafts you instead!



Minimum Memory: 4Mb
Minimum Processor: 486SX 25 or better
Hard Disk Space Required: 900K
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA, SVGA
Sound Cards Supported: Entire SoundBlaster range, Pro Audio Spectrum, Gravis Ultrasound, Pro Sonic 16, Microsoft Sound System, Ensoniq Sound Scape
Controls: Joystick, Gamepad, Keyboard
Comments: Double-speed CD-ROM drive required

Price: £49.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: SCI **Tel:** 071 585 3308

Make sure you don't hit that blue arrow in the middle of the track – if you haven't won enough money, you can't pay for repairs!

POWER

Damon Hill might like the idea of a one-player rallying game where it's just you against the course, but Charlie Brooker wants a little more thrill for his spill.

I CAN'T DRIVE. I haven't sat behind the wheel of a (real) car for about six years. Six years ago, I had 33 (yes 33) driving lessons, followed by a nightmarish test in which I nearly had a head-on crash... on a roundabout (don't ask). When it comes to driving, I'm as much use as a Neighbourhood Watch scheme run by Dennis Nielsen. I'm only telling you this so that if, at any time, during this review, you find me saying things like: "the cars handle just like the real thing", you'll know that I'm a lying little fib-face. Okay? Good.

All right then, *Power Drive* is a top-down view motor rallying game from US Gold, and it presents you with the opportunity to enter a World Rallying Championship, taking place in eight different nations. There are a total of 48 courses, with a variety of terrains and climates – sand and sun in Kenya, for instance, and ice and snow in Sweden. Furthermore, each of these courses falls into one of three categories – Time Trials (fairly self-explanatory, that), Rally Cross (basically another Time Trial, only this time there's a computer-controlled snotrag getting in your way all the time), and Special Stages (in which you have to perform a series of different manoeuvres, such as zig-zagging through a load of red cones without knocking any over – also against the clock). As you'd expect, the courses get increasingly harder as you near the end of the championships, until you'll find yourself "doing a Marc Bolan" every three seconds on the British forest trails.

Super sprint with knobs on

When you start the game, you're given some cash to spend: you've got to buy yourself a car, of course, and entering each course costs you money as well. You'll also have to shell out for any damage you incur during a race, and if you haven't got enough then you'll just have to put up with driving your knackered old jalopy around until you can scrape together enough prize money to pay for the repairs – which is a bit of a downer if you've smashed your headlights into a zillion bits just before undertaking a night time stage, meaning that you end up having to "use the force" to navigate your way along the track as perilous corners zoom toward you in the inky darkness.

"For a Megadrive game, Power Drive is fairly realistic; but for a PC game, it's unusually arcade-y."

The controls are fairly simple – there's no manual gear option, although you do have to toggle between forward and reverse gears yourself (I'd have preferred the "hold down the brake button" method of reversing) – and lend themselves perfectly to a PC gamepad; not surprising when you consider that *Power Drive* is also being released in SNES and Megadrive formats.

(Below) One of the good things about a single-player mode is that you can ignore traffic signals and drive the wrong way around the circuit without hazard.

And therein lies the problem. *Power Driv* is a bit of an anomaly; it strives to convey sense of realism, with the rendered car graphics, the repairs, the different terrain and the realistic (or so I'm told) manner i which the cars handle corners, and so on, and then it goes and bungs a load of "Turbo" power-ups onto the track,

Here Comes The Night

Power Drive's **night stages are one of its few saving graces. Not because they're more fun than the daytime ones, I've just always liked night stages in any kind of game. I once spent an entire school holiday playing *Spy Hunter* on a ZX Spectrum, because someone had told me that eventually you'd get to a night stage (you didn't). And I kept *Stunt Island* on my hard drive for ages, just so I could fly the pterodactyl inside the baseball stadium at night. Night stages? I love 'em. But that's me. The saddest man in Britain.**

DRIVE

(Above) If you want to add some fun to your game, you could try a sub-routine of 'hit the unwitting spectator'.

Room For Improvement

Since *Power Drive*'s excitement factor drops by about 90% as soon as you realise there's no two-player option, here a few suggestions on how you can make the game more exciting.

1) Drink four bottles of wine before you begin, thereby turning it into "Drink Driving Simulator" (despite my best efforts, I was unable to run over any of the spectators).

2) Pretend that the computer is your bestest mate and shout light-hearted abuse at it every time its car overtakes yours, just as you would if it was being controlled by a real person.

3) Add an element of hard-edged danger by holding a loaded revolver to your temple while you play, making an inward vow that you will pull the trigger should you fail to beat the clock.

throwing, nay, *hurling* all aspirations of realism straight out of the nearest window and into the skip on the pavement outside: the one with "Void Concept Disposal Unit" spray-painted up its side in three-foot high Helvetica. For a Megadrive game, it's fairly realistic; for a PC game, it's unusually arcade-y.

However, that's more of a curiousity than a drawback, really. There's nowt wrong with an odd blend of realism and video game lore, as long as it's fun to play, say I. But the big problem, the one that killed *Power Drive* stone dead as far as I was concerned, the one that pulled out a crossbow and shot it right in the forehead with a shiny steel bolt, the one that pulled off a special "finishing move", ripping the opponent's arms off and beating them about the face and neck with them, was the lack of a simultaneous two-player mode. It's just not enough *fun* on your own. Most of the time yours is the only car on the track, racing against the clock, and when you do have some direct opposition, it's only a solitary CPU driver who seems to have graduated from the James Dean school of motoring, and demonstrates his prowess by repeatedly slamming into the sides like a total arsewit. There is a multi-player mode of sorts, in which up to eight would-be rally drivers can hold their own championship – but it's a case of "waiting your turn" unfortunately. Boo.

Must try harder

So, as a one-player title, there just isn't enough game for me. I'm sorry, okay. The graphics are fine, the sound's decent enough, the presentation's all right, the night time stages look cool... but that's about it. Nothing special. You drive round and round ad nauseum, with the occasional "driving test" interlude. If you drive round and round well enough, you might win enough cash to buy a slightly faster car, so you can drive round and round that little bit faster. The addition of a split-screen two-player mode would have ensured thrills and spills aplenty, not to mention at least an extra *30* points on the score I've given it. As it stands you'll be stifling a yawn after about an hour of play. If you want a great top-down racing game that'll give you a decent one-player mode, with a brilliant two-player mode chucked in as well, buy *Micro Machines*. If you want to drive around a track on your own 48 times in a row, buy this.

(Left) While you wait for the game to get exciting, you can make up your own manufacturers' advert by engraving its brand name in the tarmac. Here, we're trying for Lada.

SCORE

50

30 WHOLE POINTS off for no two-player mode. Sod off, *Power Drive*.

Minimum Memory: 580K base memory

Minimum Processor: 386SX

Hard Disk Space Required: 10Mb HDD

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Controls: Joystick: Yuk. Use a gamepad.

Notes: A special consolation prize to Power Drive for being the first game in ages that simply ran first time, without me having to juggle any memory about.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** December
Publisher: US Gold **Tel:** 021 606 1800

173.

Friday 3 September 1994

The gods had predicted we were about to unearth something powerful, when suddenly the Doctor returned. "Henry, look here ... I've found it ... an Orchid SoundDrive 16 EZ ... packed with features, they're practically giving it away. "What," I replied, "so little for 16-bit sound and upgradeable to wavetable too?". We were suspicious and sent him to explore further...

Wednesday 8 September 1994

The keeper of the pyramid has been talking in his sleep again tonight. Now we finally know the facts of the SoundWave 32+SCSI. He murmured tales of incredible expandability, crystalclear wavetable sound and a cache of bundled software.
Could it be true ... those Orchid guys are again onto something big!

Saturday 11 September 1994

At last, the intrepid doctor returned late last night, shaken by his latest find. We probed him further to reveal the secret of wavetable upgradeability. "Orchid's WaveBooster daughter-cards", he disclosed, "and in three forms too", so it is possible to upgrade both the SoundDrive 16 EZ and SoundWave 32+SCSI.

But will anyone believe us!

P.T.O.

SOUNDDRIVE 16 EZ

- SoundBlaster Pro compatible
- Microsoft Windows Sound System compatibility
- Joystick/MIDI port
- Mitsumi CD-ROM interface
- Optional SCSI-2 CD-ROM interface
- Upgradeable to wavetable with WaveBooster daughtercards

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There are few things in life that get Patrick McCarthy as excited as an inflatable marmoset and a tub of I Can't Believe It's Not Butter. (Shouldn't this be tied in with the game a little? Ed.)

NOVASTORM

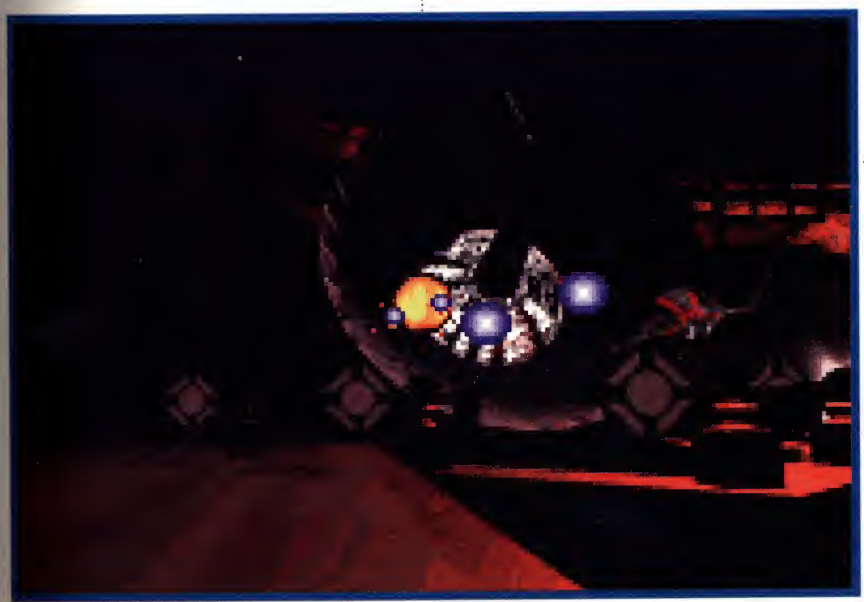
MANY YEARS AGO, in the early days of computer games appearing on the PC, I bought an into-the-screen shoot 'em up called *Silpheed*. There wasn't a single screen shot on the cover of the game – just loads of hard-sell quotes from American (and probably non-existent) magazines and endless reams of cover blurb about how it would have you flying about on gorgeous planets and through outer space, having the time of your life and shooting anyone who cut you up at the intergalactic lights. When I got it home – well, to work, to be honest – and started playing it, it turned out to be nothing of the sort, of course. It turned out to be a rather poor into-the-screen shoot 'em up. I felt much the same way that most Mac users probably do these days when they read the stuff on the box of the latest much-vaunted Mac game, which again is screen shot-free, and get it home to find it was a PC shareware game in 1985. Luckily, at the time I bought *Silpheed*, you only had to take a game back to the shop and say it didn't run on your machine to exchange it for something else, so that's exactly what I did.

Why have I mentioned this?

...Because there are many elements in *Novastorm* that remind me somewhat of the ancient PC version of *Silpheed*. You fly into the screen. You view your little spacecraft thing from behind. And horror of horrors, no matter where you move your craft to on-screen, be it far top left or deepest bottom right, your "bullets" are fired unerringly towards the centre of the screen. As you can imagine, this can be annoying if the thing you want to shoot happens to sidle across to one edge of the screen, remaining there in complete safety because your shots are still aiming at the centre. And if it's also bombarding you with an array of unpleasant explosive devices at the time, it becomes doubly irritating.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Before you get to see the wonders of this game in ☞

(Above) Look at that lovely background, the flames, the sound, the animation...



The end of level monsters... the burning molten lava... the lava... just look at it!

Novastorm

(Below) It's really fast and smooth... the animation is awesome... is this what CD-ROM's all about?

☞ all their glory, you must first experience the cinematic delights of a soul-suckingly endless, and totally pointless, introductory movie sequence that goes to great lengths to tell you the plot for the game. Actors act; bits of machinery fly about; actors die; special effects are used in dramatic ways, and eventually – after sitting in front of your monitor like a dummy until your legs go numb – you manage to piece together the complexities of the situation in which you find yourself. Gradually it becomes clear what you must do in order to succeed: shoot everything.

So, armed with this information, and now thoroughly aware of your motivation for this scene, into the game you go, gun blazing. Well, firing out little blue bits of laser-ish stuff, anyway. And that's it, for as long as it takes for you to get bored. It's straightforward, bog-standard shoot 'em up territory: a series of sections in which things race towards you or appear over your shoulder for you to fire at (and which, perspective-wise, are often hard to relate to the background at all) followed by the traditional end-of-level boss, in front of which you hover until you kill it or it kills you. Each time you reach the end of a section, you'll be treated to dramatic cut-scene footage of your ship zooming down through swirly landscapes, or climbing elegantly away into the clouds. Things explode, you crash, you fall asleep.

(Below) Shame it's all very samey, linear and just a bit boring. Really a case of 'nice presentation, shame about the gameplay'

I know what you're thinking...

...You're thinking that the backgrounds look good, that the end-of-level bosses look impressive and that the thing might be a bit of a laugh. What you can't see, though, is that it doesn't matter where you fly in the backgrounds, you'll still be taken through the bits you have to go through – between rocky outcrops, down murky trenches, etc. Yes, if you fly "into" any jutting walls in the backgrounds you lose energy. But all this really means is that there's a box around the edge of the area you move in – you still just move about in a flat plane while the backgrounds whizz around you, and you get taken to where you're meant to go. The term for this type of game, I've just been told, is a "game on rails." And although the backgrounds certainly do look very pretty, they don't look a lot different to those made on landscape generation programs, where you can design a tract of land in any way you choose, and devise a fly-by route with which to view it. This game is essentially one of those with a flat, uninspired shoot 'em up game stuck over the top.

It's obvious. The games industry operates identically to the film industry, where any film that's successful generates a host of imitations (Bram Stoker's *Dracula* begets Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*; *Doom* begets bloody everything, etc.). *Rebel Assault* had linear shoot 'em up sections in stunning landscapes, intercut with film clips taken from the movies and shifted a fair few units: here come the copies. Unfortunately, taking a tired old shoot 'em up engine, adding some cut scenes and a dash of acting and sticking sections of it in a trench doesn't make another *Rebel Assault*. See that score? Thirty of those points are for the background graphics. Avoid. Z

It's a beautifully animated end of level baddy. Who would have thought it!?

SCORE

Repeat ad nauseam: "Pretty graphics doth not a game make."

Minimum Memory: 350k (Base) 4Mb
Minimum Processor: 486 (25mhz)
Hard Disk Space Required: Not installable
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA (Local bus)
Sound Cards Supported: SoundBlaster, Gravis
Controls: Keyboard, joystick

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+DOOM21B3BA402	Invincible
+DOOM21B3BA403	Walk T Walls & Invincible
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+DOOM21B3B1C01	Get Computer Area Map
+DOOM21B3B6001	Get Shotgun
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+DOOM21B3B2C01	Get Red Key
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+DOOM219BBE000	Turn off Radar Map
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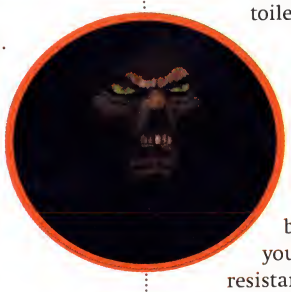
Dark Sun
Wake of the Ravager

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

At last Dark Sun – the only game especially designed for Paul Lakin, the man who flies north for the winter.

THE WORLD of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (AD&D)* is littered with clichés. But then so is the world of *AD&D* reviews. Each one starts with a long ramble about the world of *AD&D* – its highs, its lows, its rather nasty fish-paste sandwiches. Now that is all going to change. With reckless disregard for my word rate, I'm leaping straight into the *Dark Sun* review.



Dark Sun?

Certainly is, dad. Absolutely pitch. Not literally you understand, but when power-mad mages reduce a once fertile land to an arid desert things can hardly said to have landed sunny side up.

Desert Sun?

Yes, dad, a desert. The world of Athas is now a dry and dangerous place where even T. E. Lawrence would be loathe to tread. (Though the absence of delivery boys might tempt him into taking the bike out for a spin.) The land is full of the most vile creatures and safety (well, relative safety) can only be found in the city states, ruled over by the last of the mages. One of those cities is Tyr and it is here that the game starts.

You and your merry band of men/women/dwarves/small furry creatures called Eric have to find your way around the town in order to get a feel of what's going on. Initially, the emphasis is on making friends or contacts and not stepping on too many toes.

(Above) Typical – the hotel looks great in the brochure but when you get there it ain't got a roof.

Steptoe son?

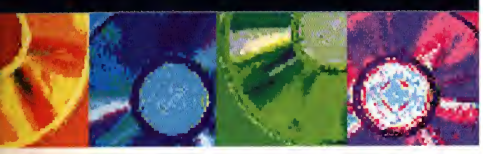
Of course, dad. You've got to see how the land lies before you start committing yourself to causes. This is classic *AD&D* territory. Having generated the four members of your party, complete with the usual collection of characteristics and interbreeding, you don't just leap in with a quest. Instead, as you traverse the city, you pick up news, gossip and the odd mini quest. Even at an early stage of the game there are so many quests within quests that it's easy for the unwary to lose track. At one stage I got so overwhelmed by the various sub quests that I'd had to undertake in order to complete the more important quest of getting some documents for someone that, when I had finally got the ruddy things, I couldn't remember who they were for. Ah well, perhaps I'm just getting old. (I seem to be going to the toilet an awful lot these days, too.) Anyway, as you progress you discover more of what's going on and get drawn into the plot. Provided you can avoid a sordid death up an alley at the hands of the various thugs who roam the city, then before you know where you are you've joined the underground resistance and are up to your neck in a life-and-death struggle with the dragon kings. More than this I cannot say since at least half the fun of this game is uncovering the plot(s), but you should by now have got an idea of the way this sun is setting.

(Above) Nice shagpile carpet though. *(Is this strictly relevant? Ed.)*

Setting sons?

No, dad, setting *sun. Setting Sons* is a classic Jam album from 1979, which you have gratuitously introduced into the review simply to a) prove you can even get a Paul Weller reference into an *AD&D* game, and b) get you away from these irritating *Sun*-type sub heads and let you get on with the review. *(And not before time. Ed.)* ☞

Dark Sun – Wake of the Ravager



(Right) And some of the parquet floor is a joy. (What has this to do with the game, pray? Ed.)

To what do we owe the pleasure?

Dark Sun – Wake of the Ravager is really *Dark Sun 2* (*Dark Sun 1* being *Shattered Lands*). However, as is the way with SSI games, the name remains the same; only the sub title has been changed to protect the innocent. I guess this is fair enough since it's a new story on an old engine. Before SSI come leaping down my throat, I know that somewhere in this office there is a press release listing the differences between this game and the original. But I can't find it, can I? (Pause, followed by frantic rustling of paper.) No, I can't. Based on my own hazy memories of *Shattered Lands* and the screen shots I've checked in the original review (*PC Zone* issue 9) it doesn't seem much different. Thing is, though, I don't mind. If it ain't broke don't fix it and *Shattered Lands* had a straightforward, relatively intuitive control system, fairly good use of magic and was easy to get into. All of which is true of *Wake of the Ravager*.

Above all, both games have a strong and addictive story line. Information comes to you gradually and you keep playing it much as you would keep reading a good book. The story is strong enough to overcome the weaknesses of the game itself.

(Below) Of course one of the joys of parquet is its easy wipe quality – no messy blood stains. *(Enough. Ed)*

Weak of the Ravager

The most immediate weakness of the game is its graphics, which are far from impressive, especially for a CD (but I'll come to that later). However, they're no worse than "okay" and (like *Shattered Lands*) they are an improvement on the old SSI fare. *AD&D* players have always seemed willing to accept less than outstanding graphics in return for what they feel is a greater depth of gameplay. But then, *AD&D* fans have always accepted things we lesser mortals shy away from. An arcade addict is going to get pretty hacked off with the combat. (Ho, ho.) Me? I can stand the turn-based nature of it (the dramatic music makes it kind of exciting), but the splodges of colour with numbers on each time you make a hit are a bit trying, to say the least. It's like being on the set of the old *Batman* TV series.

The movement is a bit of a let down, too. At times it all gets a bit jerky, but there's worse than that. Although you can call up an overhead map, click where you want to go and let the computer do the walking, you're obviously going to spend most of the time moving your character(s) around the screen. Unfortunately, it can be a bit imprecise. On one occasion I had to go with some weird leather-clad character to the public baths. Now, few people have more experience than me of going to public baths with weird leather-clad characters but I kept getting left behind. It took me nine attempts to actually arrive at the same time as my guide. Boy was I angry (well, a little bit huffy anyway.)

Shadow of the sun

(That's *two* Paul Weller references.)

Reading back I see I've written this review assuming that you all know what *AD&D* is about. Normally that would be fair enough since no one but an *AD&D* fan would play an SSI game. However, with *Wake of the Ravager* I think the storyline and control system might even make for the odd convert. It's not going to win over the hardened hack-and-slash merchant but it is one of the best *AD&D* games to date.

The people who are likely to be disappointed, though, are (once again) the CD owners who expect something more than digitised voices and the odd cinematic sequence for their upgrade. That's all you get here and, even though the cinematic sequences and music are good, I still have a bit of a problem with American accents in "medieval" style games. However, if you forget your prejudices against *AD&D* I'll forget mine against Americans and we'll both have a quiet night in with a pretty smart RPG.

SCORE

Love it for its brains not for its looks.

(Below) And just look at all the storage space. *(That's it, get out. You're fired. Ed)*

Minimum Memory: 4Mb RAM

Minimum Processor: 386/33MHz req. 486/50MHz rec.

Hard Disk Space Required: 33Mb to 79Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: Aria, Sound Canvas, Soundscape, Wave Blaster, Soundman Wave, SW 32/GW32, Gravis Native Mode, SoundBlaster family (except AWE card)

Controls: Keyboard

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Publisher: Mindscape **Tel:** 0444 246333

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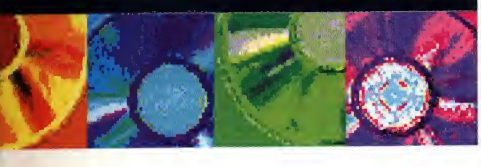


(Right) Pick your weapons wisely and don't let the bogies get up your nose.

Remember *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat?* Or even, if you're an old fart like me, its predecessor, *Advanced Flight Trainer?* If you do, you'll no doubt have fond memories of sitting in front of your AT being harangued by this old, bald, fat git in CGA. And you loved it, didn't you. Well it's back. Bigger than before? You better believe it. Better than before? You'll just have to read on.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

US Navy Fighters

THE BAD NEWS for all you *Chuck Yeager* groupies out there is that the old sod doesn't even make an appearance here. More than that, in fact, he doesn't even get a name check. You see, *US Navy Fighters* is a spiritual, rather than genealogical (look it up) descendant of the likes of *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* and *Advanced Air Trainer*. Although the concept of the game is familiar and a lot of the features seem to be lifted straight from the earlier games, there are many, many differences. Not least of these is the processing power needed. I thought that this bit should come in early so that, if you hate the way I review things and have anything even a little slower than a 486DX/33, then you can save yourself the trouble of reading any further and skip onto the next review. Gee, aren't I kind. Actually, that was a lie. You can play *USNF* on a 386. Apparently. It would be, what's the word? Crap. But it would run. Really, you've got to use a DX2 or better and at least 8Mb of RAM. Because it uses its own memory manager, you only have to load your CD, sound and mouse drivers – *US Navy Fighters* will make sure you have enough memory to be going on with and Electronic Arts have been generous enough to provide you with examples of sample config and autoexec files, so that even the least techie of players should have no problem in freeing up enough RAM to get by. But still, unless you are tooled up with the quickest and best PC on the block, you're not gonna see this game at its best resolutions. And that would be a bit of a shame.

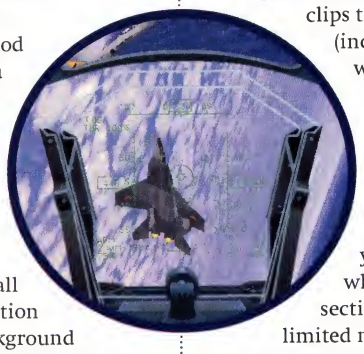
US NAVY FIGHTERS

(Left) Hello sky, hello clouds...

(Below) Eat missile, borsch munching Ruskie scum.

But what have they done with Chuck?

Whoever planned *USNF* used their heads, that's for sure. Although the best resolutions and highest levels of detail call for a Super-Ninja PC that most small countries would be unable to afford, it is still possible to get a pretty good result with a "cooking" DX/33, as long as you have a decent graphics card. In fact, the graphics are bloody good. I reckon Chuck's been left out 'cos he's a fat, ugly git, and with the video quality that *USNF* gives you it would be too unpleasant for the delicate sensibilities of the public. There is a hardware configuration routine in the game which allows you to choose a base resolution anywhere from 300x200 right up to 1280x1024 for all you P5/100 owners, as well as an on-line detail selection screen which allows you to set both object and background details, from low and all options off, to ultra high with everything texture mapped and Goraud shaded. So, if you need a cuppa but don't want to pause the game, just crank everything up to full and go put the kettle on between frame updates. It looks great, and, hey, maybe the fact that you have time to admire the view while in the middle of a dogfight is a design feature.



So you reckon we'll like the view?

USNF looks good. No. That isn't enough. *USNF* looks bloody good. The sea looks like, well, sea really. The sky looks like sky. The ships look like, guess what, ships. The aeroplanes look like... well, I think you'll have got the picture by now. Unlike some of the other graphically rich games around – especially flight sims – *USNF* manages to look good without being too clean. It also manages to avoid the peculiar leaping around ground effects that we learned to love in *Strike Commander* and complain about in *Fleet Defender*. Basically, this is a really nice looking package that performs a thorough stress test on your video card and CPU and may be worth busting the piggy bank to get that Pentium board for. Then again, it may not be. Read on...

Just tell us if it's any good

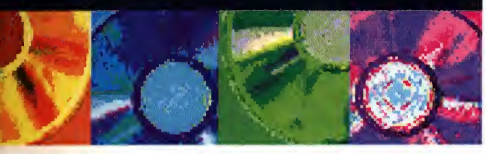
Be patient. I'll tell you when I've told everyone what it is and does. *USNF* is in many ways, the descendent of *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*. You get a choice of aircraft and missions (both pre-generated and DIY), as well as a new campaign option. As you may have guessed from the title, the action takes place on a carrier and involves (allegedly) US Naval fighters. It also includes the F-104 Starfighter (aka Widow Maker, Manned Missile etc.), which the USN never bought, and the Sukhoi Su-33 Russian naval interceptor, which the Pentagon doesn't want. The presence of the Ivans is explained in the neat video intro to the campaign, but we never find out what the Starfighter is doing there. There is presently only one campaign, although more are no doubt on the cards. Electronic Arts plan an expansion for early next year which will allow multi- (at least four-) player networking (allied and opposing), and will include more aircraft (including the Harrier) and at least one extra campaign. But not yet. Pressure to release the game before Christmas means that we have to wait (and pay) for the extras.

Look, tell us if it works

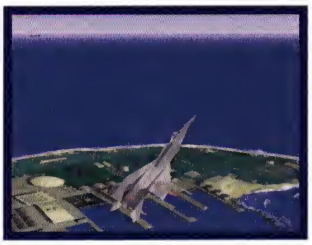
Okay, I will. Yes, it works. Nicely. Provided that you've got the power, that is. The pre-built missions are designed to give you a nice progression from hard to very hard to OmiGod. You get to learn to fly, take off, land (in fog and clear weather), do the Cobra (Sukhoi only), dogfight, ground strike, crash and eject. Oh yes, lots of ejecting. The ejection sequence is the best ever. Bar none. You'll almost want to get shot down just to see it. Well, perhaps not, but it is really neat. The campaign is nicely designed, although likely to offend some people with its tales of hard-line Soviet uprisings and plots against Mr Yeltsin, and packed full of real digitised clips that explain developments when needed (including why you have Russian pilots and aircraft with you). Unlike *Strike Commander*, there are no symmetrical faces and Thunderbirds lips. All the non-interactive bits are full motion video, and they look and sound great. But surprisingly enough, the best part of *USNF*, at least until the network version comes out, is the mission builder. If you remember the earlier packages, you'll remember the "There I was at xxxx feet when I came across/was bounced by/attacked..." section where you could build a mission from a limited number of variables. It was good and allowed enough variety without going into the *Tornado/Falcon* level of complexity where it takes longer to plan a mission than to fly it. Well, *USNF* has taken that and improved it. Now you can choose

(Below) Get well tooled up if you're gonna mess with the big Migs.

US NAVY FIGHTERS



(Right) Picking up hitch hikers on the motorway hard shoulder is an endorsable offence.



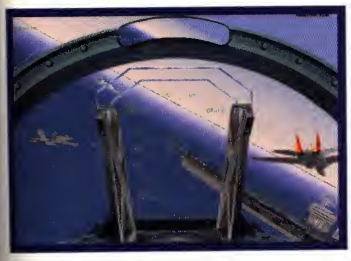
☞ the same basic things and also select ground targets, take wingmen, even choose the nationality of your allies and enemies. The package takes care of waypoints and so on, so you just pick the teams and go. It's easy and works really well. You can go up against an ace Russian pilot in a B-52 and you may well get shot down. Alternatively, you can make all your wingmen Sierra Hotel and you won't have to get your plane dirty by firing 'cos they'll do it all for you. Somewhere in there you'll find a happy balance. Hey, if you really want to be flash you can choose your nose and tail art and your callsign, either from a pre-generated list or from your own choice. And guess what. If you pick one of theirs (some of them are okay) then all radio and intercom calls to you use your callsign. Neat, huh?

What about the flying?

Well, that is what a flight simulation is all about, isn't it? And yes, it flies okay. It isn't *Tornado* or *Falcon*, but to be fair it isn't meant to be. It seems to be aimed at those of us who liked the idea of *TFX* but thought it was kinda limited. So you get a flight model that has distinct differences for the different aircraft but which takes some of the donkey work out of flying for you and removes a little detail from what otherwise is a fairly accurate game. So you get an F14 which does bleed energy at a scary rate (not as much as the real thing), but which sweeps the wings for you and doesn't disintegrate when you put the wheels down at 600 knots. Most important of all, though, you get a GIB who does his job instead of expecting you to leap into his seat and work the radar and weapons for him as well as flying. This is one hell of a load taken off your

> "Somewhere in there you'll find a happy balance to suit your skills (or lack thereof)."

(Below) Make a real name for yourself by crashing into the carrier instead of the sea.



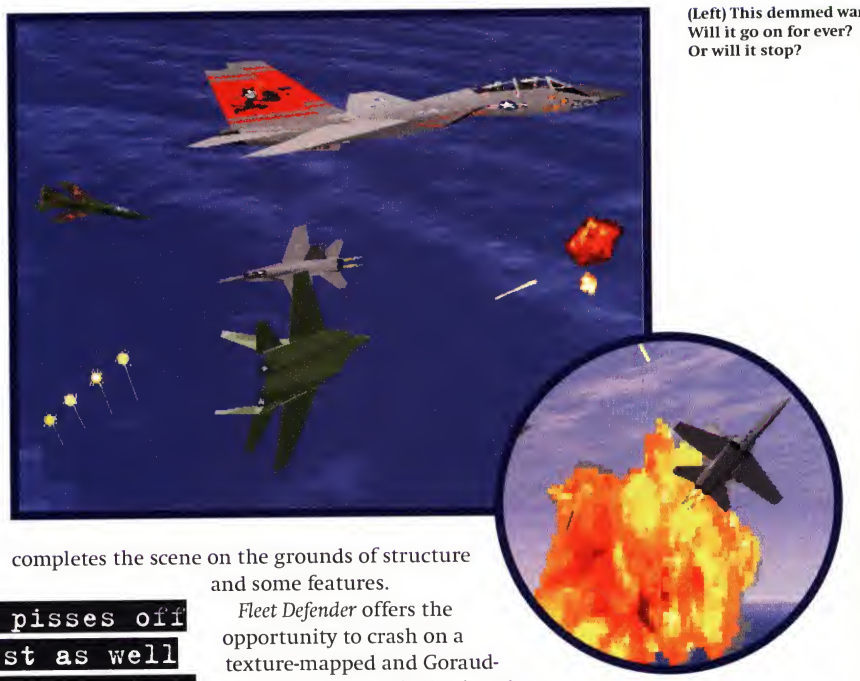
(Left) Johnny Red at 3 o'clock, tally-ho, see you back in Blighty, er, type stuff...

mind, and frees you to do the interesting things such as nailing your target and crashing into the side of the carrier instead of straight into the sea.

Now, we've all seen games where your back seater gives you advice and info, and pretty tacky they look too (Sierra's dire *A-10* springs readily to mind). *USNF* doesn't ponce around with an inset picture of your ballast looking worried and a caption telling you what he's saying. No Sir. You get digitised sound with subtitles for the deaf/slow/foreign player which can be encouraging ("Let's nail this guy"), informative ("New waypoint 255, 54 miles"), worried ("This is not good") or just plain pointless ("Turn and burn baby"). Either way, they add to the atmosphere and you really start to appreciate the company when things are getting tight. Your wingmen talk to you as well, adding to things further, with extra chat from the carrier and AWACs on occasions, making the whole thing hang together nicely. Sound effects are there in abundance, including the best part of *TFX* as you and JAFO start to grunt as the G builds up and the world goes all dark at the edges. Pleasant it ain't. Atmospheric, however, it sure is.

What about the other sims?

There are several contenders for the "Most Worth Buying Flight Sim" crown. Comparisons are invidious, although they will inevitably be made, so I may as well get in early. After all, there aren't that many proper flight sims around, and even fewer that use 150Mb of space on a CD. Because of the subject matter, *Fleet Defender* is the obvious first contender, although complexity and variety will call *Falcon Gold* into the picture, and graphics and storyline will involve *Strike Commander*. Family connections mean that Chuck Yeager gets a look in, and *TFX* completes the scene on the grounds of structure and some features.

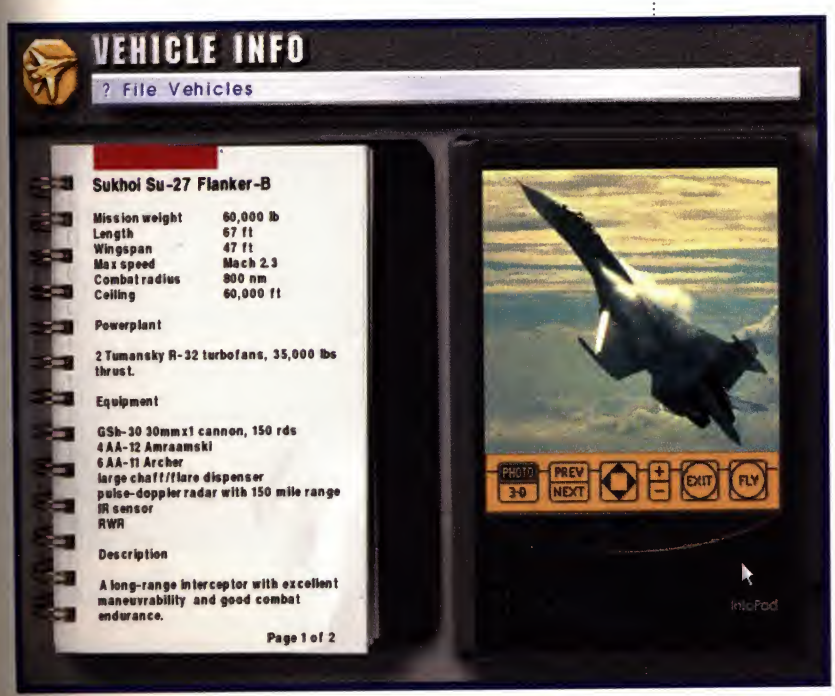


(Left) This demmed war. Will it go on for ever? Or will it stop?

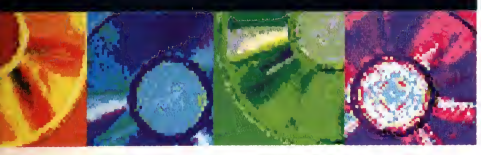
"The Tomcat pisses off energy almost as well as the Tornado and is a really crap close-up dogfighter."

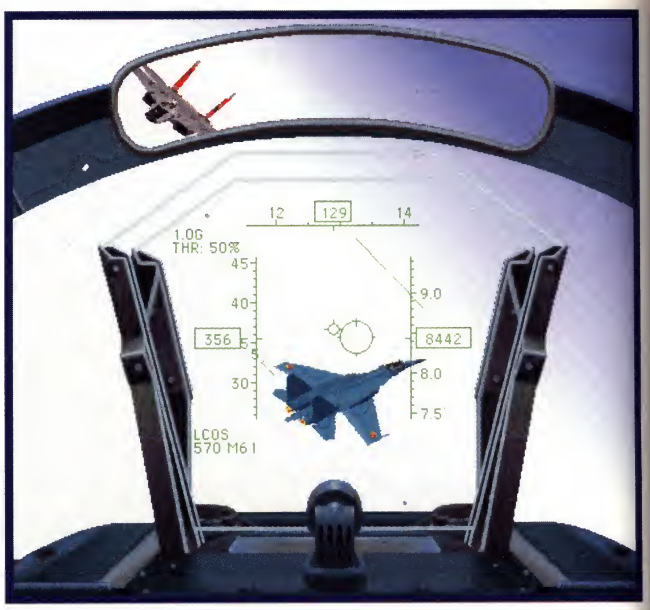
Fleet Defender offers the opportunity to crash on a texture-mapped and Goraud-shaded carrier while having the whatsits kicked out of you by enemy aircraft. It flies quite well and shows that despite what Tom Cruise would have you believe, the Tomcat pisses off energy almost as well as the Tornado, and is a really crap close-up dogfighter. It also shows why there are two crew members in the plane: 'cos the workload is ridiculous and this really impacts on the enjoyability of the game. *Falcon Gold* also gives you the chance to crash into a carrier, although nowhere near as prettily. Flight is spot on and the single-seater aircraft give you a sensible workload, although you still get shot down a lot. It shows how hard carrier landings are and also gives an excellent multi-player facility. *Falcon Gold* is still a ☞

(Below) Choose your wingmen well and you can put your feet up and have a cup of Rosy.

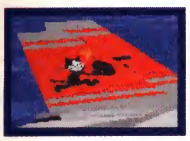


US NAVY FIGHTERS





(Right) Crank everything up to full and you'll have plenty of time to fix your make-up in the mirror.



(Below) The sky looks like real sky, the sea looks like real sea, and you look like a real plonker until you get the hang of it.

☞ cracker but really showing its age now, but *Falcon 4* is in the wings and should be worth waiting for.

Tornado is brilliant, but has all the disadvantages of *Fleet Defender* without the graphics or carrier. If you want a good flight model, and need to find out why the RAF are so keen to avoid air-to-air combat in Tornados, you need look no further.

Strike Commander is one of those games you either love or hate. It looks great, but needs serious processing to get the best out of it. The storyline is excellent and hangs the whole thing together, but the flight model was probably done by Airfix on an off day.

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat is great fun and highly playable for all the reasons that *USNF* is so good, but lacks on the graphics front. In fact, it will run quite acceptably on a 286!

TFX is a great idea that doesn't quite work. Graphically and conceptually it is pretty close to *USNF* , but gameplay is too limited and there are too many irritating bits for it to really cut it.

> "Nothing that I've listed so far can hold a candle to USNF as far as gameplay and appearance go."

You just know what I'm going to say now, don't you? It pains me to say it, because I rank in the world's top ten *Falcon 3* lovers and the top 20 *Tornado* fans.

US Navy Fighters is better. I'll clarify. Nothing that I've listed so far can hold a candle to *USNF* as far as gameplay and appearance go (provided you're well tooled up with a serious PC), except for networked *Falcon 3*. You got loads of digital sound. You got graphics that are probably the best available – until something better comes out, that is. You got gameplay that means even a hardened old hack like me will keep it loaded and probably keep going back for more. You got enough variety of aircraft to keep most propeller heads happy for ages. And you got enough demand on your PC to make your local retailer grin from ear to ear as he tucks you up with a nice little finance package on that Pentium he had on the shelf. All in all, you got all things to all people.

Does that mean you like it?

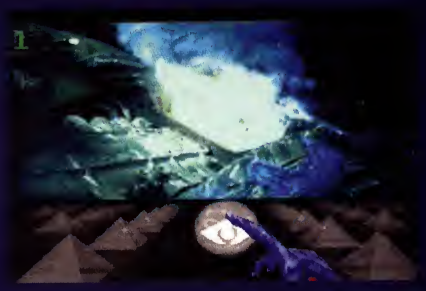
Yeah, it's not bad. In fact, I'd probably buy it. With my own money even. And that doesn't happen very often, 'cos I'm pretty tight. But I still want them to get the network version out now, because although playing with yourself is Okay, it's not like the real thing. Z

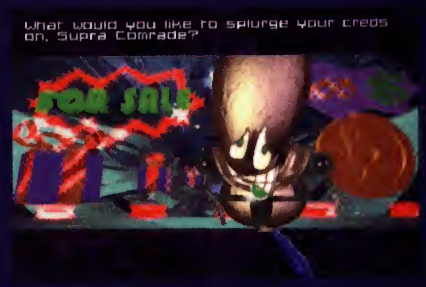
It's worth getting shot down just so you can check out the ejection sequence.

If it had a multi-player facility, I'd give it 100. But it hasn't, so I won't.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb
Minimum Processor: 486SX25
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA, SVGA up to 1280x1024 resolution
Sound Cards Supported: All major soundcards
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick, Thrustmaster Flight Control System
Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** December
Publisher: Electronic Arts **Tel:** 0753 549442

PC CD-ROM £44.99





In the absolute and frozen silence of never-ending deep space, at the far end of the cosmos, the spiral of multicolour galactic cloud wraps up the planet Corpo with its volutes (at 40° of boreal latitude).

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Microfolie's

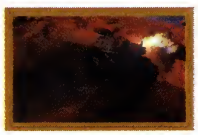
(Left) *Quelle surprise.* The yankee hardware is all faster and tougher than the cheap foreign muck.

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

(Below) You can take control of any tank under your command, provided it has been wiped out already.

Armored Fist

Tanks are gigantic, unsightly, 70-ton monsters that look ridiculously out of place in everyday society. So, coincidentally, is Patrick McCarthy.



WHAT ON EARTH goes on in the heads of the people who name the more "macho" computer games? All right, they want something that sounds really hard, because they think the average mug punter will think he's being pretty hard just by buying it. They want something that's short and snappy enough to put on the back of a nylon bomber jacket, so that the aforementioned punter can pretend he's practically a gimlet-eyed tank commander in real life. But what do they come up with? "Armored" sounds tough, certainly, and "Fist" sounds threatening. But let's face it, put the two together and it sounds like a worryingly heavy-duty sex aid.

Whatever happened to straightforward naming conventions, the likes of which confronted our fathers when they made their consumer decisions in days of yore? In those days the designers would have called it "Tanko! – The Tip Top Tank Game", and everyone would be happy. No embarrassing boxes to carry home and no dodgy logos that inspire sweaty men to approach you on tube trains with lewd suggestions. We had a bit of a poll in the office to come up with some more suitable alternatives. I think you'll agree they manage to combine accuracy and evocativeness to a remarkable degree:

a) Concrete Bunch Of Fives
b) Structurally Strengthened Knuckle Sandwich
c) Painfully Large Dildo

Maybe the last one doesn't quite have it. What do you think? Write in with your own suggestions – the best might even win a copy of the game. But more likely it will be plagiarised by one of us in a forthcoming review.

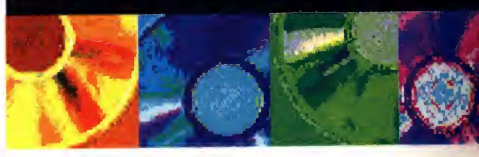
For your delectation...

On your left, the American vehicles' thermal vision. On your right, the Russians' image intensifier. Whaddya mean you don't give a toss?

Barrel roles

There are two basic ways to play *Armored Fist*. If you're the type who doesn't like to get too committed, single battles can be selected from an enormous list, set in scenarios ranging from scorching desert wastes to freezing snowbound wastes. If, on the other hand, you're bang into long-term relationships, the campaign mode is for you, whereby a number of missions are played in order until a country is liberated, a dictator overthrown or a band of travellers routed. The first campaign is actually a series of training missions, which is handy.

The campaign mode doesn't provide a career mode as flight sim aficionados would recognise it. It's more a series of missions around a theme, taking place in one location and designed so that you can't play certain missions until you've completed certain others. There are no promotions, medals or any of that malarkey: you just fight the battles and bog off to somewhere else to fight



The mission position

Where *Armored Fist* scores over its airborne cousin *Commanche* is that you won't finish the campaigns quickly, because you can't save the game between missions. And when you do finish all the one-off battles and all the campaigns, fighting each from both sides, you don't have to lash out all over again for mission disks because there's a mission editor.

Missions can be locked or unlocked. Locked missions appear in campaign mode to stop you editing them to your advantage; unlocked missions can be edited and used as a basis for your own missions. You can even save your own missions as locked missions to stop you cheating.

There's a wide range of terrain. Once you've selected the map you want you have a free hand, placing vehicles, plotting waypoints and so on. You can place four types of trees, four types of strategic targets, artillery and air bases. You can also set friendly, enemy and rogue minefields, and dig trenches. The designer is well thought out, with a draggable floating tool-bar. Hours of fun for most people; weeks for the obsessive.

some more when you've finished. The only reason you have to save a player name is that it keeps account of the campaigns you've completed, the number of battles won and lost, and the number of times you've relieved yourself in your underwear during a surprise attack from an enemy helicopter.

Every battle and campaign can be played using the "Western" (i.e. American) Abrams M1A2 and the Bradley M3, or the "Eastern" (Russian) T80 and BMP-2. Remember to pick the one you find most ideologically acceptable before you start, kids, or your hearts won't be in it.

War of the monster tanks

The tank games usually fall into one of two distinct approaches: either you speed around shooting merrily at everything in sight with your thermo-nuclear cannon until your turret gets blown off, or you spend days plotting out dreary strategy game-style tactics on a tiny map, finally get into your tank and your turret still gets blown off.

(Above) From the outside, tanks tend to look a bit of a mess.

Armored Fist manages to combine a little bit of both. Although it certainly has a great deal of immediacy, there's also enough there for the tactically-orientated to get their yellow teeth into. There are missions that allow you to control anything from one to 16 tanks at a time, and since you have to do it in real time, you have to be pretty nifty with a mouse.

Despite the excellent cut scenes that punctuate the game, first impressions of the game itself aren't that good. The external views of the tanks are a bit of a mess, especially when you watch one turn: it snaps from rear view to three-quarter view, and so on. There aren't that many soundcards to select from, so you're stuck with SoundBlaster effects and the in-game music is ropey, to say the least – but then nobody wants to drive a tank and listen to music anyway. You drive a tank to listen to the scary noises it makes.

The more you play the game, though, the more it grows on you. The sound effects turn out to be quite good, imparting atmosphere and no little satisfaction when you run a tree over, ram something solid and fire the guns (preferably all at the same time). Basically, if your tank's hit by a shell and it makes you flinch, the game has atmosphere. The sampled speech helps: orders are shouted, information yelled and panicky warnings bawled over the constant noise. If you choose to fight for the West it's all in American; if for the East it's in traditional film-style English with funny foreign accent.

> "Remember to pick the one you find most ideologically correct, kids, or your hearts won't be in it."

Control freak

Your armoured death machine can be controlled by keyboard, mouse or joystick. I found the mouse best: it's more than satisfactory for everything except aim-locking and firing, which were handled more quickly by hitting the keyboard. If you wanted, you could play the whole thing by mouse – I just found it a pain having to click on the icons in a hurry. A normal joystick simply didn't feel right, but the game is Thrustmaster WCS compatible for those of you who are well off and not ashamed to show it.

Pop up enemy

What I call "the map screen" and what the game, in rather more militaristic manner, calls "the command and control vehicle", is

(Below) You can think things through or drive around aimlessly whooping tank butt with your thermo-nuclear cannon.

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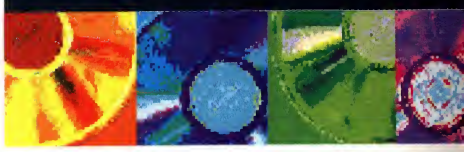

Prompts

Prompts appear when you jump about between different tanks (you can switch them off from the options menu). They ask you whether you want the one you're leaving to continue under automatic control or not. A good way to move a platoon to a good strategic position and keep it there – without going to all the trouble of altering its waypoints or mission objectives – is to take over the platoon leader, move to where you want it to stay, then leave without switching on the auto control. It stays where it is until you tell it otherwise, and the other platoon members follow suit.

where you can get a rough overview of how the scrap is developing. You only get a rough idea because the enemy vehicles aren't all visible. Any that you do see are there because your chaps can see them, or have seen them, and told you about it. Sometimes they disappear from the screen. This, apparently, is because your men have "forgotten" they're there. Whether in real life you'd forget the fact that you saw a bloody great battle tank behind you a few minutes ago is questionable, but the upshot of it is that just because you can't see anything on the map, doesn't mean there's nothing there. If there's a ridge between the two armies, they'll appear from nowhere.

The lie of the land as seen on the maps reproduces well when you're in the tanks – you can creep along in gulleys, pose on hilltops or drive along at funny angles to amuse your passengers. You can jump between any of the tanks under your control at any time (as long as they haven't just had a surprise visit from Mr Armour-Piercing), either taking over and generally having fun with guns, or just watching what happens. Each platoon will follow its waypoints, shooting the hell out of anything it doesn't like the look of. But it will also almost certainly lose the battle, such is the design of the game. So get in there.

(Right) What are you looking at, Dalek features?

It's quite fast-paced. There's the expected range of weapons to chuck at your ideological opposite, with each side having a version of the other's weapons – although, *quelle surprise*, the Americans have more and their tanks are all faster. (Cue stacks of letters from indignant military experts: "But they *are*...") Both battle tanks and the more lightweight infantry carriers are equipped with thermal sights or image intensifiers, depending on which side you're on, which alter your view appropriately when selected and help you to pick out the enemy from where they're hiding among the washing lines (as long as the washing isn't straight out of the hot wash). There's an automatic aiming system, or you can do it yourself.

(Above) Drive around at night and you get to see your enemy's thermals.

Both sides can summon air strikes and artillery bombardment, although there's no guarantee they'll turn up (sometimes they're on a tea break). If they do, the world suddenly seems to turn into the dining room scene from *Carry On Up The Khyber*. The infantry carriers also have SAMs, whereas the battle tanks have to rely on their machine guns to see off marauding helicopters. What it all adds up to, like *Commanche*, is arcade fun galore – except this time there's a lot more longevity.

(Right) You can summon up help from the air at any time, though there's no guarantee it'll show up.

SCORE

86

***Commanche* on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what I mean.**

Minimum Memory: 512 base mem, 2.5Mb XMS

Minimum Processor: 386 (486 recommended)

Hard Disk Space Required: 1Mb (6Mb recommended)

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: Keyboard, mouse, joystick, Thrustmaster WCS

Controls: MS-compatible mouse required

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** November

Publisher: US Gold/Novalogic **Tel:** 021 606 1800

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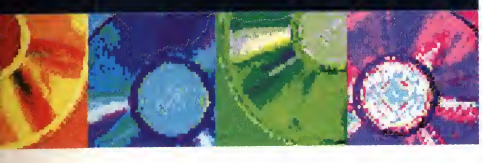

Quarantine

Quarantine is here and it's mega-violent, delightfully irreverent and, er, a bit like Chris Anderson, really. We gave it to him and jumped out of the way.

Quarantine

CABBIES OF THE WORLD UNITE and make merry. At last, your time has come and now you have a chance to get your own back. A chance to get that bastard who jumped out of the cab at Piccadilly Circus owing fifty quid in fare. A chance to mow down those tiresome old persons who take five million years to find their way to the other side of the pedestrian crossing. A not-to-be-missed opportunity to pull out a ridiculously over-sized machine gun and take bloody revenge on all those truckers who insist on beeping their horns incessantly and leaning out of their truck windows to shower you with personal insults and raise questions as to what your sexual preferences might be. All this, and more, can be yours in Gametek's new shoot-'em-up with a difference: Cabbies Fight Back, er, I mean *Quarantine*.

Make no mistake, this is a shoot-'em-up with a difference. There are no enemy soldiers, *Doom*-type mutants or space-like things to blow up in Gametek's new blaster. Your targets instead are futuristic vehicles, fellow cabbies, innocent pedestrians and, well, just about anything that moves really. Moreover, all this merry blood-spilling fun takes place from behind the wheel of your shiny yellow taxi. In that sense, I suppose you could almost call it a sort of driving sim as well.

Before going on to the plot, I may as well get the obvious question everyone's been asking about this game out of the way, i.e. is it just like *Doom* except you sit in a car? Well, you may have noticed already from the screen shots that it looks a bit similar to iD's classic kill-'em-up. Yes, the scenery graphics are obviously inspired by *Doom*, the guns and weapons have a *Doom*-type feel to them, but *Doom*-On-Wheels *Quarantine* it most definitely is not. *Quarantine* has a completely different feel and an approach to gameplay it can call totally its own. That's the "is it a *Doom* rip-off?" bit out of the way. On to the plot.

21st century cowboy

The game is set in the 21st century. You play a cabbie (hover-cabbie actually, these things fly about, you know) in Kemo, a city on the east coast of the United States. Kemo has a somewhat erratic history to say the least. A soaring crime rate prompts the US government to commission a huge corporation, called Omnicorp, to wade in and clean the place up. Great big walls are built around the city and the whole place is quarantined off. The government decide Kemo is a perfect place to put all new criminal offenders as well as keeping the city's current criminals at bay. Then Omnicorp have a

(Below)Oh no! I've been ambushed by a bunch of killer hover-type thingymebobs.

(Left) If you get bored driving you can whip out your pistol and shoot things. Cool!

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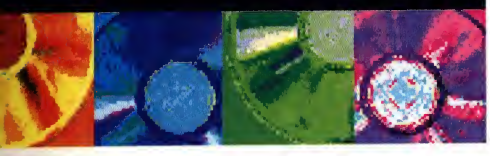
Quarantine



(Below right) You see that bottom, right corner? Well, there used to be a person there but I got bored and blew him up.

(Right) A pleasant drive through the park? Not for long...

brainwave. They decide to test a drug, which supposedly neutralises criminal tendencies, on the city's inhabitants. "Let's put our wacky drug in the water supply and see if it drives them all loopy," they shout playfully. Imagine their delight when all Kemo's inhabitants drink the water and turn into homicidal psychopaths whose fave pastime is killing things. So here you are, about to embark on your new career as a cabbie in an over-sized looney bin. That's the story then, here's the low-down on the gameplay.

Return of the Killer Cabbies

The gameplay in *Quarantine* is quite simple in concept and has been designed to get you up and running, blasting the hell out of everything as quickly as possible. At the start of the game, your first objective is to raise money to buy weapons. You build up your cash by taking people on taxi rides, but that doesn't mean they just hop in, you drop them off and everyone's happy, oh no. You are given a time limit to get your passengers to their destination. If you take too long, the fare they offered you goes down by the second. If the "fare-ometer" reaches zero they pay you nothing, even if you still get them to where they want to go. If you know this unfortunate situation is about to arise, you can simply eject them from your cab and splatter them all over the walls.

Driving the cab is pretty easy to handle, and you soon build up a healthy wad of cash with which you can purchase better guns and power-ups. You'll need these later in the game when people send you on missions to kill other people whom they don't like.

So that's what it's all about, but is it fun? For me, the answer is a definite 'yes'. The graphics are excellent, the sound effects are superb, and the cab is a real hoot to zoom around in. And for added entertainment you can mow down innocent pedestrians and blow up fellow motorists if you don't like the colour of their cars. There's a cool full-motion video intro with people shooting things in it, a CD soundtrack with songs by some Australian blokes, which is crap but it doesn't matter because you can use your own CD and still have the sound effects from the game over the top of them (*Elastica* come highly recommended by us). The only major niggle I have with the game is that the crap copy protection from the disk version has sneaked its way on to the CD. Apart from that, if you like your arcade action fast, hectic, and unspeakably violent, *Quarantine* is the game for you.

SCORE

An excellent blast and it looks good too.

GO AND GET 'EM

Figure 1: Before

All you London cabbies out there will recognise figure 1 as a picture of the good old London taxi. Boring, isn't it? It won't be, though, if you buy loads of guns and electric chainsaws and things and strap them on to the front of it. Apart from looking really cool, it will also mean you can have hours of endless fun zooming around the place blowing everyone you don't like to pieces. Go on, go for it, you know you want to.

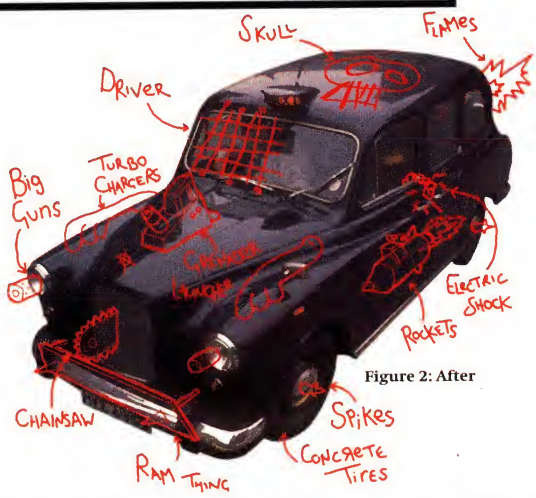


Figure 2: After

Minimum Memory: 4Mb
Minimum Processor: 486DX or better
Hard Disk Space Required: 1Mb
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: Roland, AdLib, SoundBlaster
Controls: Thrustmaster Wheel, joystick, keyboard
Comments: Double-speed CD-ROM drive required

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
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ACES OF THE DEEP

PC ZONE CLASSIC

When Duncan MacDonald was five his mum read him a book called *Simon the Submarine*. This, naturally, makes him the *PC Zone* resident authority on U-Boat simulations. *Aces of the Deep*, from Dynamix, now comes under his professional gaze.

RATHER THAN WRITE this review in a clump and then tag on an arbitrary score once I've finished (i.e. the usual way), I'm going to award points (both plus and minus) after every paragraph, and then, when I've finished, all I have to do is add them up. Simple for me and illustrative for you. So let's go.

Thought one...

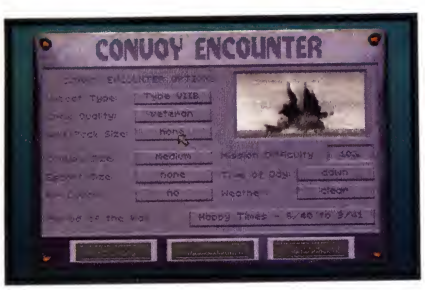
I'll tell you the first thing that made me shout "hooray" after firing up *Aces of the Deep*, and it was this: the sight of the Northern Atlantic Ocean in the main overview map. Why so happy about that? Well, this being yet another American game, I was rather stupidly assuming it would be the same as in *Silent Service* i.e. American subs against the Japs in the Pacific. But, like I've suggested, it's not. It is in fact German submarines against the Brits, the Yanks and the allied merchants in the Atlantic. And what this adds up to, rather obviously, is that you already "know your way about", geographically speaking (unless you're Australian). Want to get from Holland to Gibraltar? (You go down, easy.) From France to Nova Scotia? (You go left for a few thousand miles, maybe skirting up through the Irish Sea en-route to see what's about.) And so on. In other words, setting potentially fruitful waypoints is a piece of piss and you're never going to find yourself saying "Where the f*** are the Woop-Woop Islands?" and studying the map for 26 hours. Thank Christ for that.

Score: 10 points.

Thought two...

The *Aces of the Deep* manual is smart, and makes a really great read for when you're sat on the bog. For instance, did you know that there was this U-boat captain called Adalbert Schnee who, during the very last few days of the war, managed to pop his periscope up, undetected, slap bang in the middle of an anti-submarine convoy? (Talk about "The Bitter Bit", eh?) And in his sights, and ripe for a sinking, was the infamous (to a German) HMS Norfolk. Schnee was just about to let rip with tubes one and two when a radio message came through from his superiors back in sausage land: the war was over and all U-boats were to cease hostilities *immediately*. What would you have done? Personally I would have given HMS Norfolk a chinning anyway – and then I'd have pottered off to Rio De Janeiro for a life of sun, chicks and booze, renting out the sub as a fishing boat or something. Schnee, however, simply cursed (apparently), lowered the periscope, and slipped away, back to Europe. But anyway, back to the point... a lengthy read of the *Aces of the Deep* manual is guaranteed to turn even the silliest of people into an unadulterated submarine bore. Erm, for instance, did you know about the neutral buoyancy inherent in *(...Snip. Ed.)*.

Score: 10 points.



(Top) The temptation to surface and watch your kill sink is irresistable, even if you've got a destroyer and two cruisers breathing down your neck.

(Right) Cue blindingly obvious joke... Through the hatch is the toilet, and as usual you've forgotten to flush it.

Thought three...

Also included in the *Aces of the Deep* package is a flyer for an organisation called Sharkhunters. They're trying to flog something called *KriegsTageBuch* magazine. It's hard to tell whether Sharkhunters is a neo-nazi affair or just a celebration of submarine warfare in general, but I'll tell you something for nothing... it's bizarre. Here's the Sharkhunters' slogan: "Yesterday's enemies are today's friends". And here are a couple of quotes from current Sharkhunters' members, talking about *KriegsTageBuch* magazine...

"I find it interesting. Let's get submarining back to what it truly is: teamwork, persistence, and determination. Keep up the good work. God bless you." – *Eugene Fluckey, Skipper, USS Barb.*

"Many thanks for the KriegsTageBuch. Be sure that my best wishes for your health and happiness are on their way across the Atlantic with the velocity of light." – *Otto Kretschmer, C.O. of U-99.*

See? I told you it was bizarre. I'm going to send my Sharkhunter coupon to the local BNP offices – I expect they'll be interested for one unspeakable reason or another.

Score: 0 points.

> "The Aces of the Deep manual is smart and makes for a great read for when you're sat on the bog."

Thought four...

The game system is exactly the same as the game system in all those other Dynamix sims we know and love i.e. *Red Baron*, *Aces Over the Pacific*, and *Aces Over Europe*. In other words, you can choose from any one of a zillion real-life historic one-off missions or you can opt for an on-going war career (in which hardware improves as the war progresses). The fully tinkerable realism panel is in evidence too, meaning you can be as authentic as you like regarding dud torpedoes, your field of vision, your vulnerability, your enemy's detection capabilities, and so on. When in an on-going war career, as usual, the rewards come in the form of promotions and medals. You know the drill by now though, so I won't go on at length, but I'll add that this standard old approach works well enough, so why fiddle with it? The only thing missing is more interaction in-between the missions in the Career Mode. It would be nice if Dynamix had included "talky bits", where you could interact verbally with other officers, *a la Pacific Strike*. All you get, however, is a single characterless screen called "Nightclub" where you click on the "Next" icon and are then told certain consecutive facts: "HMS Invincible has been sunk." Next. "The Italians have now joined the war." Next. "The British have a new weapon." Next. And on and on. Snooze City.

Score: 2 points.

(Above) The submarine's navigator suffered from an appallingly bad case of Parkinson's disease.

Thought five...

I have finally seen guru shading and textured bitmaps doing a good job rather than merely being clever techniques for slowing a game's frame rate. Yup, just look at the *Aces of the Deep* screenshots. The ocean swells – you rock up, down and every which way. The weather changes. The stars come out, and are accurately mapped, so seriously-boring folk can say "Look, there's Ursa Minor, we must be travelling south south east". Experience storms, fogs, everything. And all the time you're bobbing about like some kind of treacle-covered retard on a slow-motion trampoline. In fact – and it's a point well worth mentioning – the manual claims that the in-game option called Stationary Horizon (accessed from the realism menu) was put there because some Dynamix game testers actually became seasick while playing. Whether this is the truth or not I can't say, because I don't suffer from motion sickness myself, but nevertheless, you have been warned.

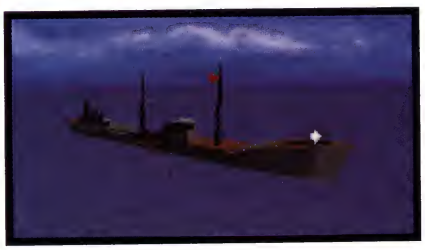
Score: 40 points.

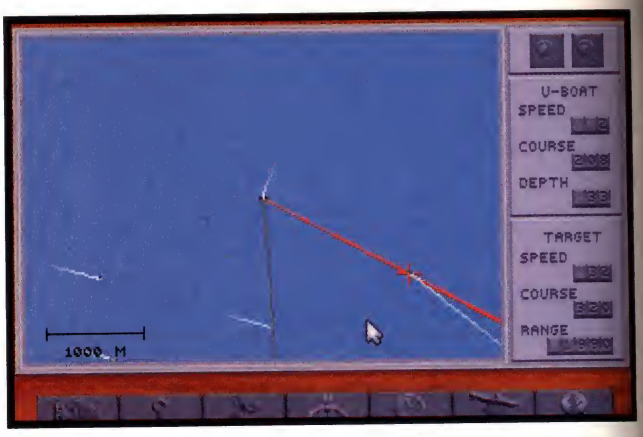
Thought six...

While using the binoculars, the periscope or while simply standing on the bridge bobbing up and down (and becoming seasick, if the claim's true), you have full 360-degree rotational powers. "So what?" you say, "You have full rotational powers in all submarine games." ☞

Aces of the Deep

(Right) PC Zone "Funny Caption Competition": Think of a humerous caption for the picture to the right and you could win a PC Zone "I am very clever" badge.





(Above) This is when you start shitting bricks, because the red line means your sound man has picked up "high speed screws" (a fast ship). In other words: you're about to be given a present, which generally comes in the form of about three hundred thousand zillion depth charges.

☞ And yes, so you do, but in *Aces of the Deep* it somehow feels just that tad more realistic. Especially when you're standing on the bridge, because as you turn you see the different parts of the sub – so you don't have to check the compass bearing to tell that you're looking at the stern, because you can *see* the stern. That sort of thing. And as for the times when you're not at the periscope, the bins or on the bridge, the graphics are equally excellent. The screens are static, sure (apart from the top-down map), but the dials move, there are "hot" areas for the mouse pointer and so forth.

I think what I'm trying to say here is that, as well as doing the aesthetics job pleasingly enough, everything, control-wise, is keenly intuitive. So whether you use the mouse pointer or the relevant quick keys, it's all much the same and is dead easy to get to grips with.

Score: 30 points.

Thought seven...

When you use the Torpedo View (i.e. the external camera), the hitherto superb graphics fall apart somewhat... tiny, distant ships appear "nearer" than larger, "closer" ships do. It's like you've suddenly taken a strange drug of some description (let's for arguments sake say Jimson Weed: available from Kew Gardens, or, failing that, Peru). Also, when you use the external camera on a targeted object – say an aircraft – and you're close enough to be visible yourself, er, you are... even though you might be 100 metres below the surface. It's best to steer clear of the F10 key altogether as it happens, purely because it's capable of shattering the overall illusion. Oh, and while I'm at it, on the overhead moving-map screen you'll very occasionally see a ship travelling on land. I tell you, it's that bloody Jimson Weed again!

Score: minus 30 points.

Thought eight...

Tension! That's what submarine games are all about, just like those numerous black and white Sunday afternoon WWII films starring Dickie Attenborough, John Mills and Gordon Jackson. Will your torpedoes strike home? You can't hang about to see, because just like Dickie, John and Gordon Jackson, you've got an urgent appointment with the ocean floor... on silent running. But then there's a distant "boom". You punch the air in a mixture of joy and relief. Silence. Silence. Boom! Yes! Silence. Silence. Silence. Silence. Damn, must have missed. Then "ping". Oh no! Then "ping" again. And again. And again, only this time it's somehow louder, and 15 times more scary. And, like any submarine sim worth it's salt, *Aces of the Deep* hasn't been at all stingy with the sound effects. There's the digitised crew speech in either German or English (with cheesy kraut accents and a brace of bad acting), and the whole gamut of undersea noises: splashy ones, explodey ones, hull creaks and chopping propeller sounds (at various volumes) from the ship or ships above you.

Oh, and something I've forgotten to mention, but must, is that the artificial intelligence of the enemy is absolutely first rate. You'll be absolutely cacking yourself, take my word.

Score: 30 points.

Final thought...

I've been saying for ages (and you may disagree, but bear with me) that there aren't any "definitive" submarine games.

The *Silent Service* duo had the atmosphere, for sure, but they also had shitty bitmap graphics when you looked through the periscope. Bummersville. *688 Attack Sub* and its sequel, *Seawolf*, suffered similarly – although the latter earned itself a very temporary *PC Zone* "definitive" tag by default, due, basically, to its sound effects. But now, at last, we do have a "definitive" sub sim. And I doff my cap to it. But even so, I feel it's taken more than its time in coming, and should, by rights, have appeared at least a year ago.

"...all the time you're bobbing about like some kind of treacle-covered retard on a slow-motion trampoline."

So what else can I say? Well, if I was a games designer, here's how I'd beat *Aces of the Deep* to become the next "definitive" sub game: (1) More "reward screens" between sorties, with a bit of pseudo human interaction – as mentioned earlier; (2) Tighten up the depth queuing for even more visual realism; and (3) *Doom*-style, first-person stuff for inside the sub: you're at the bottom of the ocean, listening to the sonar blips of an incoming destroyer. It'd be nice to be able to at least pace up and down, wouldn't it?

Score: Minus 2 points. Z

(Left) The graphics sometimes appear a tad dodgy i.e. tiny, distant ships appear "nearer" than larger, "closer" ships.

The graphics, gameplay, sound and atmo combine to make this the best sub game available.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb

Minimum Processor: 386 DX33 (Recommended: 486)

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: SoundBlaster and 100% compatibles, Pro Audio Spectrum, Roland MT-32 and compatibles, General MIDI

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Warcraft: Orcs and Humans

Neither an orc nor a human, Chris Anderson is perfectly placed to take an objective look at Interplay's new strategy game.

ONE OF THE PROBLEMS with RPG-based strategy games is they inevitably have RPG-type plots. Almost without exception, these unlikely tales tend to be unimaginative, sleep-inducing, two million-page bores. Enter *Warcraft* with its tale of the mythical land of Azeroth (oh gawd, here we go).

All was well in the land (hurrah) until nasty conjurer bloke Medivh came along (boo) and opened up a gateway from another world. From this gateway came millions of ugly orcs who didn't like anybody and decided to prove it by clonking everyone they came across. The King of Azeroth immediately sat up and said: "Something must be done." Unfortunately, he didn't mean that *he* was personally going to sort it out; he was talking about *you*. "Get on your hoss and do the lot of them," he probably said. And so it came to pass that you, protector of the land of Azeroth, brave baddie-clonking do-gooder, are tasked with sitting in front of a computer screen, looking at lots of little people moving around in it, and, er, killing lots of orcs. There's also a game stuck in here somewhere too. Let's move on to that then.

"Blimey, I didn't realise how many problems I had with the game until I started to type up this review."

Orcs and more orcs

The game is played out over a series of increasingly difficult scenarios. At the beginning you have to decide which side you want to be on. You can be on the humans' side and go into battle with folk sporting the same fair features as yourself, or if you're really ugly, you might feel happier teaming up with a bunch of orcs. Either way, the gameplay is more or less the same. You are given an objective at the beginning of each scenario. Mission types vary from rescuing people and building lots of stuff to simple kill-them-all-immediately affairs. As was the case with *Dune*, the key to success in each scenario is to build places to make weapons as quickly as you can and, when you've got enough heavy-duty weapons together, you wade into your opponent's area and hope he hasn't had enough time to do the same thing.

There are only two resources you need to get hold of in *Warcraft*: lumber and gold. You get these by sending peasants to chop wood in the forests and trundle backwards and forwards from gold mines with loads of money for you. Once you have enough resources, you can start

(Below) There's orc-clonking galore in this totally awesome scrap.

Warcraft: Orcs and Humans

(Left) The lads go looking for the nearest pub and find... a gold mine. Boo.

building a barracks to train soldiers and a church to train clerics (wizards). And so it goes on. You build things, you train people, you send them off to kill lots of orcs. In the early missions, you only get puny footmen or, if you're really lucky, an archer. But as the game progresses you get to train knights and wizards and use great big catapults for chucking heavy objects at people. Just like *Dune*, all the action is played out in real time (i.e. the little people on the screen don't stand about, they *move* about) so the battles get really hectic, with people chucking arrows about and casting mega-spells all over the place. Before you can get into any serious scraps, though, you have to explore the playing area for each scenario. This is done *Civilisation* style, where the play area is blacked out until you move into it. The more of the play area you explore, the more gold mines and forests you'll find and, of course, the more orcs you'll come across.

That's about it as far as gameplay is concerned. On to the crux of the matter, i.e. is it any good? Well, like so many games of its type, *Warcraft* has its good points and bad points. Let's get the downers out of the way first.

Going Down

The main problem with *Warcraft* is that, although it's quite addictive to start with, it eventually becomes a tad repetitive, despite the variety of the missions. For the first half of the scenarios, you're doing exactly the same thing you've been doing in all the others: building and searching. It turns out to be not so much a race against time as a battle against boredom. Also, you have to play really far into the game before your wizards get to have any serious spells to play with. The other problem is one of personal taste, really. In the CD version, when you click on one of your units, they acknowledge you in digi-speak by saying things like "your bidding my lord?" and crap like that. Frankly, after a very short time, the whole thing began to drive me up the wall. If, however, you're a power-crazed lunatic with a penchant for patronising olde English-type gibberish, you'll probably love it. Anyway, you can't turn it off, so you have to either get used to it or you have to play the game with the sound off. Blimey, I didn't realise quite how many problems I had with the game until I started to type up this review.

Fortunately, the game has some plus points to make up for the aforementioned probs. Namely...

Going back up again

... It's fun. I played it for ages and ages. Some of the later missions are really hard and had me vowing resolutely I'd "beat that bastard" if it killed me. Also, some of the spells the clerics get to use in the later stages are a real laugh: like when you see four or five of them together blowing the whole playing area to pieces. *Warcraft* is not particularly original, and the graphics won't win any awards, but it's reasonably playable, and it's big (there are lots of scenarios) so if you like it you'll be playing it for ages. Also, Dawn (one of Interplay's PR persons) says it's great, so it must be. Z

IN PERSPECTIVE

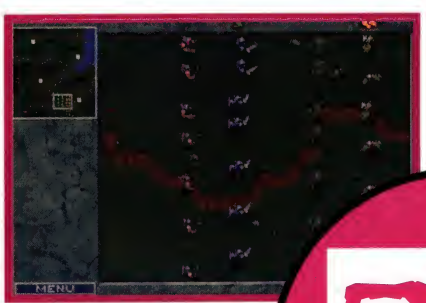
Warcraft ain't brilliant, and it ain't particularly original. But at least there's plenty of it, so if you do get hooked you'll be hooked for ages.

Dune

Megalomania

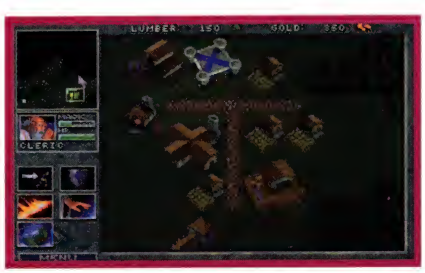
Warcraft

Ambush at Sorinor



(Above) This is a demo bit. Why don't my men stand in impressive formations like that?

(Below) At the heart of every successful campaign lies a pretty village. Here's one I made earlier.



75

Good, simple, addictive strategy game.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb

Minimum Processor: 386 or better

Hard Disk Space Required: 1.3Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: General Midi, SoundBlaster, AdLib Pro, Pro Audio Spectrum and compatibles.

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

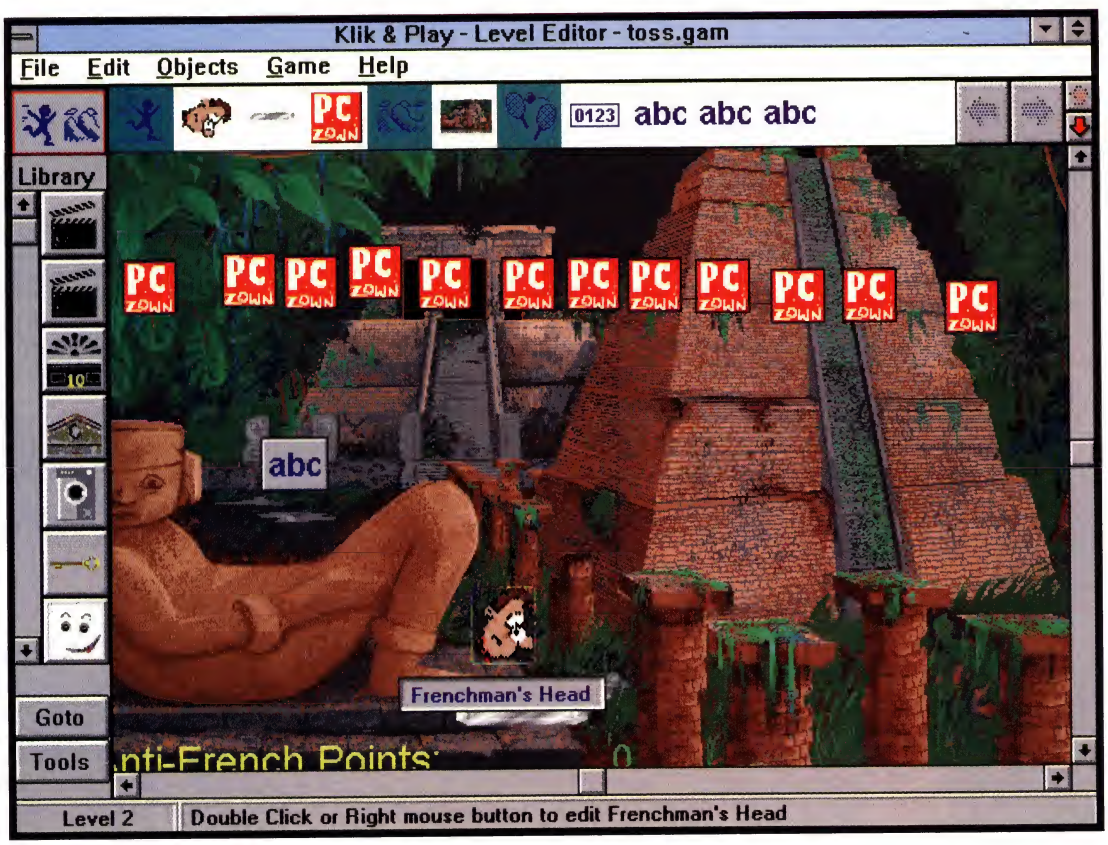
Price: £39.99 CD & Disk **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Interplay **Tel:** 0235 821666

Now you can bore your friends, humiliate Frenchmen and save money with your own crappy, homemade games. And that's gotta be a boon for the generositily underendowed xenophobe in a hurry. Charlie Brooker does his bit for European harmony.

KLIK 'N' PLAY

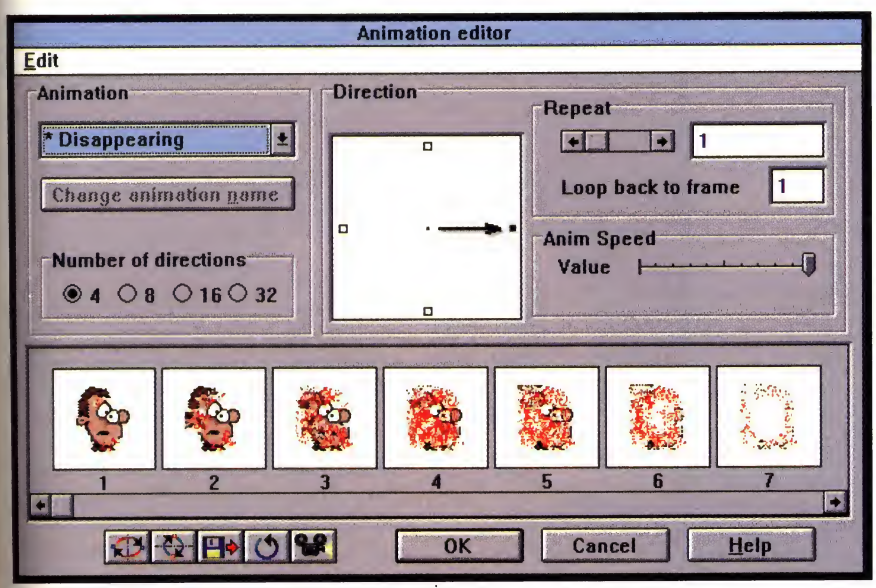
(Below) Pick your sprite, pick your boxes, sit back and watch Anatole manger merde.



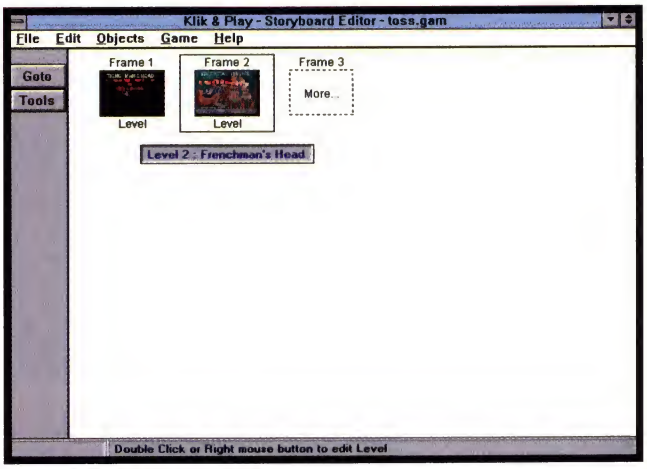
ARE YOU the sort of person who actually bothers to use those 10p off coupons that are sometimes printed on the sides of catfood tins? Do you recycle used tea bags to save money? When you go to the toilet, do you use all six sides (yes, I said all *six* sides, since the slender edges count as sides in my house) of the toilet paper? Do you sew plastic eyes on to your old, worn out socks, and give the result to your little nephews and nieces for a present at Christmas, explaining that it's a glove puppet (the lovable, sniffable Cheese Monster)? Are you, in short, a tightwadded skinflint little bastard?

If so, then *Klik 'n' Play* is going to appeal to you immensely. It's an easy-to-use game designer for *Windows*. Once you've bought a copy, you could ostensibly use it to create games for yourself, instead of buying them, for the rest of your life, saving you tons of cash and putting all the major software houses and magazines like *PC Zone* out of business completely. *Magic Carpet, System Shock, Doom, Little Big Adventure*... pah! Who needs 'em? You can do your own stuff now.

That's ridiculous, of course. The truth of the matter is that *Klik 'n' Play* won't enable you to knock up a technologically dazzling,



(Left) Making Jean-Paul disappear is pleasantly simple using *Klik 'n' Play's* intuitive step-by-step sequences.



thunderous epic that will change the face of gaming history overnight. No matter how hard you polish the games you create, they'll never have a rendered intro sequence, never have wonderous elliptoids shuffling around in 3D, never have a padlock view or a bucketful of Gourard shading. They'll mostly be single-screen shoot-'em-ups, *Breakout* clones, or relatively simple platform games. And they'll all have to run under *Windows*. So there.

Wait! Wait! Come back! I know it all sounds a bit pointless. It sounds like the video game equivalent of trying to write, film and direct *2001: A Space Odyssey* with a camcorder in your kitchen, using Lego for the spaceships and your old Vic 20 as Hal, instead of going out and renting the video itself. Well, in some ways it is. But it's also a heck of a lot of fun to use. In fact, for my money, it has an addictive quality similar to that of *Sim City 2000* or *Theme Park*. Think of it as a God game in its own right and you've got the right idea. You'll probably end up getting more fun out of designing and tweaking your game than you will out of playing it.

So how's it work then?

Klik 'n' Play, as its title suggests, is almost entirely mouse driven. There are icons here, and icons there, all ready for clicking and dragging. Menus pop up and pull down all over the shop, and there are more dinky little tick boxes than you can shake a stick at. There are so many options at your disposal, it'll make your head spin around like a pinwheel. This isn't as daunting as it sounds; the blurb on the back of the box states boldy that there is "absolutely NO knowledge of programming required", and for once that's absolutely correct – all you need is the ability to work out a sequence of logical problems. With a bit of practice, and a fair bit of ballsing everything up, it wasn't long before I'd grasped the basic gist of what everything did, why it did it, and how you could apply it. It's pleasantly user-friendly, too – it sort of holds your hand and leads you gently through the Valley of Game Design, with a charming smile on its face the whole time.

> "You'll probably get more fun out of designing and tweaking your game than you will out of playing it."

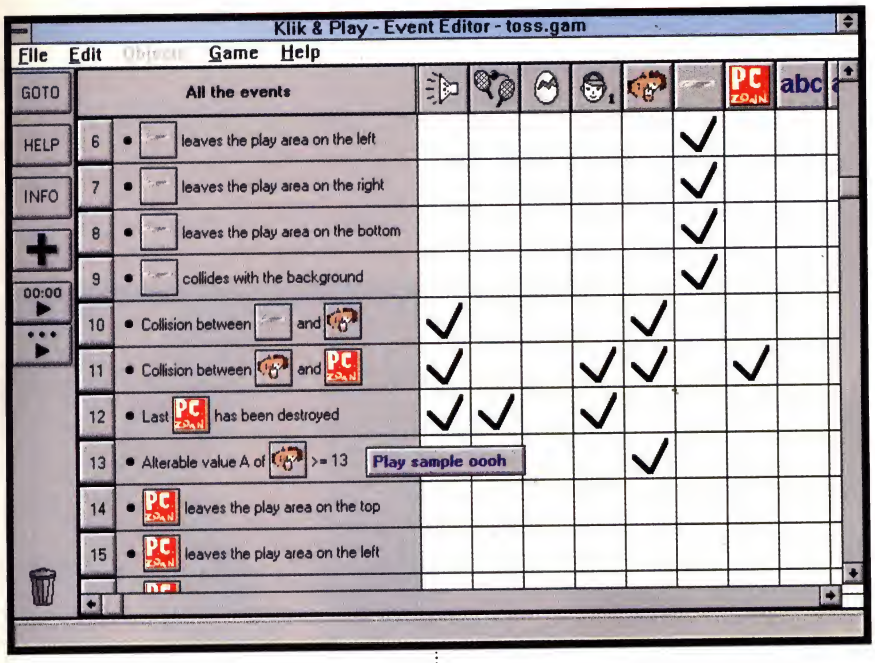
There are three main segments you'll have to use. The Storyboard Editor basically dictates the sequence of levels in the game, the Level Editor lets you set up each stage (the backdrops, sprites, and general layout). There's also an Events Editor.

I decided to make a simple *Breakout* game, using a Frenchman's severed head instead of a ball. (Not that I've got anything against the French, it's just that... oh, all right then, I

(Below) Hon hi hon. En Paris in ze Spreeng, everyone is een lurve, le etc, le etc...

CREEPY

The CD version of *Klik 'n' Play* includes a QuickTime video tutorial. This is all very well, but the bloke who hosts it is a little too scary for my liking. He's wearing an unpleasant light green shirt for starters, and he comes across like a 1970s children's television presenter. And once he starts yapping you can't interrupt him at all. I didn't trust him an inch.



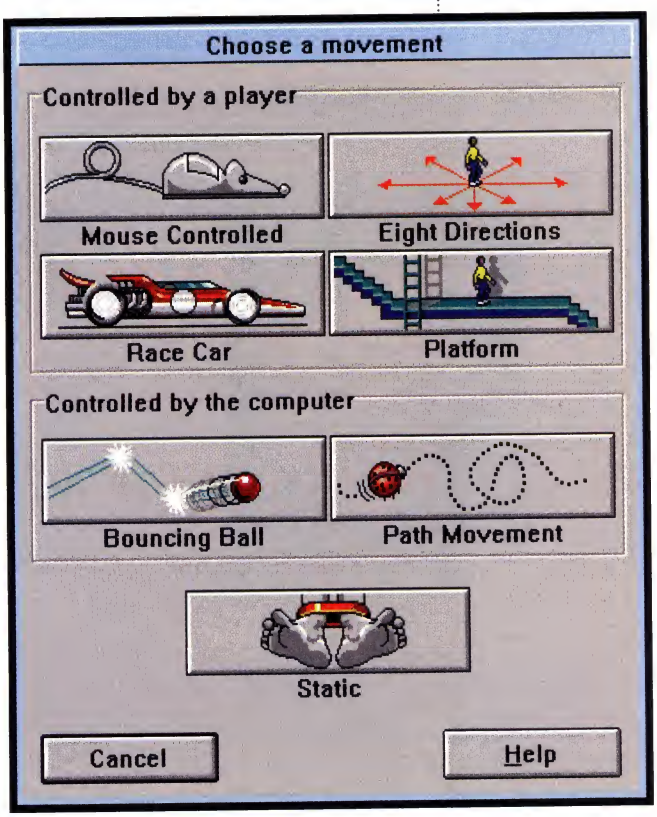
(Left) Klik 'n' Play's so simple you'd have to be a complete arsewipe to be baffled by it,

☞ hate the lot of them. Even the beautiful, talented and intelligent ones. Just because they're French). First I went to the Storyboard screen and clicked on a blank panel representing Level One. It prompted me for a name. I decided to call it *Frenchman's Head* since I am unbelievably imaginative. Double clicking on the Level One icon sent me to the Level Editor. OK, time to pick a few sprites and things. There's a wide range of fully animated ones at hand in the various libraries that come with it, but none of them were quite good enough for my purposes. It seems that no-one at Europress Interactive thought that severed Frenchman's heads would be in demand. So I created my own little sprite representing the obnoxious Gaul's foul little noggin, including a few frames of animation so that he'd be blinking in confusion as he rebounded off the walls. I drew this using the limited drawing utility included with the program, although you can always import graphics you've created on other packages if you're fussy.

Shattering Heads

Next, I decided how the head would move. I wanted it to be computer controlled and use the bouncing ball movement pattern. If I'd wanted, I could have defined a path for it to move around, and had it spitting out globs of French phlegm at me, but no, this is *Breakout*, not *Space Invaders*, so it was bouncing ball or nowt. Then I selected a graphic for the bat with which I was going to deflect him; this I took from the library. I placed it under player control, limited its movement to left or right only (objects are capable of moving in 32 directions if you want them to), and set its speed, acceleration, and deceleration rates. Then I quickly knocked up a block graphic, (an imbecilic approximation of the *PC Zone* logo will do), copied it a few times and set its movement to static. This far it had taken about ten minutes. On to the Events Editor.

The Events Editor is where you'll be fine-tuning the heart of your little creation, deciding what happens when your laser bolt collides with the Space Invader, controlling the sound effects, scoring system, etc. Since this is the hardest bit to work out – even my simple *Breakout* clone had tons of events happening all the time, such as the head hitting or missing the bat, the blocks being destroyed whenever poor Pierre's head ricocheted off one, points being scored, increases in speed, the whole kaboodle – they've simplified the process by including a work-it-out-as-you-go-along mode, known as the Step Through Editor. This is the coolest thing in the world. You start your game and as soon as something happens for the first time, it stops and asks you what you want to happen next. So, as soon as I started and Jean-Claude's bonce thumped into my bat for the first time, a little Collision message appeared, together with a range of options. Did I want his head to shatter into a million bloody chunks? Did I want it to stop moving, or to transform into another object? No, all I wanted it to do was to rebound, speed up a little, and make a sound. A few clicks later, and voila! Henri rebounded off the bat, accompanied by a sampled Oof noise from the in-game library (if I'd had the time, I could have rigged a mike up to my soundcard, and sampled the sounds of a genuine Frenchman grunting in pain, just to personalise things even more). He hit the side of the screen. The menu popped up again. Did I want him to reappear on the other side, start shooting fire at me, or anything like that? I settled for another rebound, and a different Oof noise. The process continued until I'd established the basics: head bounces around, blocks disappear, head falling off bottom of screen equals death. Okay.



> "Oh, all right then, I hate the lot of them. Even the beautiful talented ones. Just because they're French."

So it's up and running, but it's not much of a game so far. I hadn't set a finite number of lives, for instance, so the game went on and on ad nauseum – not such a bad thing if you find watching Frenchmen's heads bouncing off walls as funny as I do. There was no scoring system. When you destroy all the blocks, it carries on running. Time to go to the serious, meaty Event Editor. This section is reminiscent of those Logic Problem puzzles that were all the rage a few years ago.

'SNOT STOS

Klik 'n' Play **comes from the same stable as *STOS* and *AMOS*, two very succesful games creation programs for the Atari ST and the Amiga. It couldn't be more different, however. Both of those were basically simplified programming languages; being a total arsewit I couldn't make head or tail of either of them. *Klik 'n' Play*, on the other hand, is so simple to use and understand that only Britain's stupidest arsewit wouldn't be able to get to grips with it on some level. So we won't be seing any games created by Nick Owen then. Tops.**

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Klik 'n' Play

(Far Left) Le hurrah. Klik 'n' Play will give you a pat on the back when you acheive your goal.

(Left) Papa, Nicole. Agincourt. Waterloo. Garlic.

☞ There's a row running down the side of the screen, listing all the conditions that take place in the game, and another row along the top listing all the factors that this condition can change. The conditions are user-definable – I decided that I wanted the Frenchman's head to shatter into bits as soon as it had rebounded off eight blocks in a row, for example.

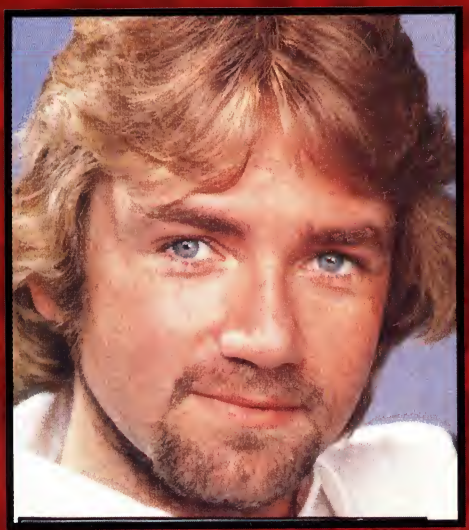
To achieve this pleasing effect, I simply had to assign a variable to the Gaul's nut, then add one to it each time the game registered a collision between head and block. So, at the start of the level variable A equals zero. Bang! Antoine collided with a block. Now A equalled one. Next I had to add a new condition for *Klik 'n' Play* to watch out for; in this case, I wanted it to play a new animation sequence showing the head exploding as soon as A equalled eight, and then play a congratulatory fanfare. It was simple – just find the row of events which take place whenever A equalled eight, and then click on the sound icon, add the sample, click on the Head icon, and tell it to change the animation sequence.

I know that all sounds horrendously complicated, not to mention dull. When you're doing it for yourself, however, it's neither of those things. And the best thing about it is that as soon as you've worked out how to achieve the effect you're looking for, you'll be itching to try out something else. You'll feel your creative juices coursing through your veins. Why not make the blocks move? Or shoot at you? Or try to dodge the severed head each time it gets near them? Why not add another bat at the top and turn it into a two-player game of *Frenchman's Head Pong*? Or change it completely by removing the bat and replacing it with a racing car, creating a top-down *Super Sprint*-esque game in which you run over Frenchmen's heads for points? You could even try a point and click adventure if you wanted – there's no reason at all to limit yourself to action games. The possibilites are virtually endless.

Basically, if you like a bit of a challenge, (and if you don't, then what kind of goddamn WUSS are you? I challenge you to a FIGHT. With FISTS.) and you're looking for something different, or if you're just interested in understanding how video games work, then give *Klik 'n' Play* a spin. It probably won't turn you into a Bitmap Brother, but it will give you a lot of fun. And, if nothing else, at least you'll be able to knock up puerile little versions of *Space Invaders* featuring clumsily-drawn nobs firing rude stuff at naked things. If you want to, that is. PZ

TAKE NOEL EDMONDS... PLEASE

If you can get your hands on a scanner, then you're in for a right royal laugh with Klik 'n' Play. Why not scan in a photo of Noel Edmonds and use it as a sprite? Think of the fun you'll have shooting him in the face at close range, making him topple off platforms onto spikes, getting run over by cars, etc. The first reader to send in a Klik 'n' Play–created point and click adventure starring Noel Edmonds, in which he finds himself out of work and decides to commit suicide (the final goal of the game), wins ten Pentiums. And a holiday. And some shoes.



Neat, intuitive, and loads of fun.

Minimum Memory: 4 Mb RAM

Minimum Processor: 386 or higher, Windows 3.1 or later

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA SVGA

Sound Cards Supported: Anything that will run under Windows

Controls: Mouse required

Notes: Running it with 4Mb was a bit of a pain. I'd recommend 8Mb. It uses its own display driver to speed up the action in Windows

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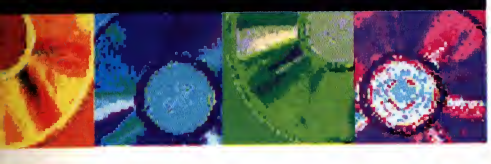


(Left) Show this one to your mother next time she complains, 'Do you think I've got eyes in the back of my head?'

CREATURE

Chris Anderson usually responds well to shock treatment. We gave him Virgin's new shooter to perk him up.

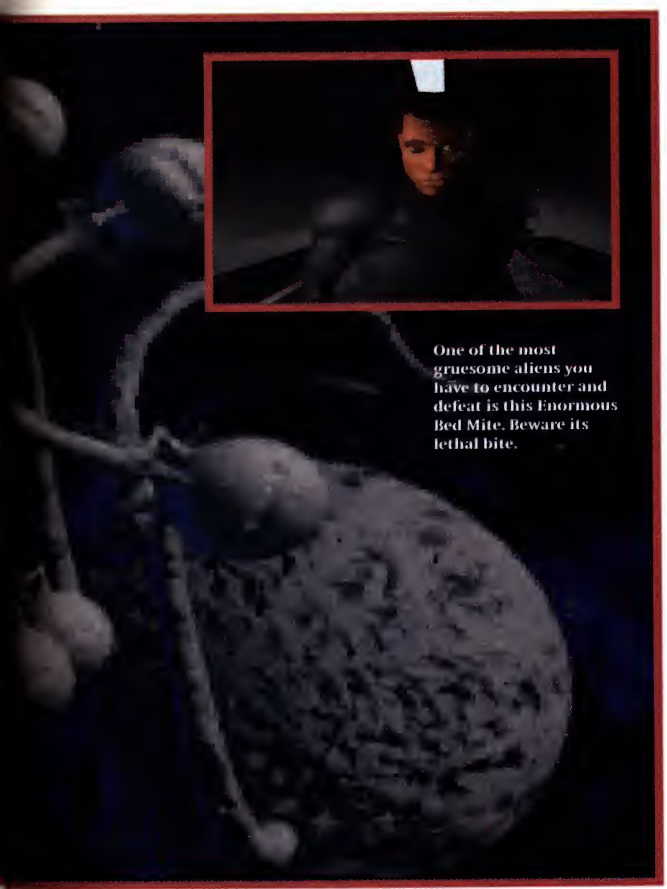
LET'S GET THE OBLIGATORY futuristic-type plot rubbish out of the way first, shall we? The year is 2023 and the Earth has some serious problems. Global over-population is the main culprit, causing famine, disease, and other such heart-breaking symptoms worldwide. The powers that be are faced with two choices: sit back and do nothing and watch World War III on their television sets, or send a space ship to look for a new planet for Earth's feuding populace to colonise. Fortunately for everyone involved, the decision was made to send the SS Amazon into the solar system to see what it could find. It ran into problems when it got near Saturn, though. Something very big got in the way and the space ship exploded. The only survivor was a rather sexy little female with unusually large expectations. She jumped into an escape pod and got the hell out of the way. Now it's up to you to find her. She is your main incentive for jumping into a space ship of your own and zooming off into space to investigate the large object that had the difference of opinion with the SS Amazon. Oh yeah, and to save the Earth too, I suppose. As for the game itself...

Irresistible intro shock

The graphics and animation for the *Creature Shock* intro have to be seen to be believed. The movement for the main character (sexy girlie) is quite astonishing and the ship explosions and so on are all suitably over the top. It's a bit of a shame, then, that the first part of the actual game you come to after that is an absolute disaster. *Creature Shock* is played out over four levels and although the first one is the shortest by far, I still couldn't wait to get the damn thing out of the way. If you can imagine a fairly tacky shareware version of *Space Invaders* tarted up with loads and loads

(Left) If looks could kill – holding down Ctrl-Alt-Delicatessen lets you assume Medusa mode when your adversary wants to get 'stoned'.

SHOCK



One of the most gruesome aliens you have to encounter and defeat is this Enormous Bed Mite. Beware its lethal bite.

of wacky sound effects, you've got a pretty good idea what to expect from the first part of the game. Mines come flying at you, asteroid things come flying at you, and you shoot the lot. Half the time you don't know what it is you're meant to be shooting at so you just end up clicking the mouse like mad and hope you hit

something. There's a guardian at the end of it to get rid of but he's no real problem – you just keep shooting him in the eyes and eventually he buggers off. Thankfully, this whole section is fairly easy to get through so it won't drive you mad for ages before you get into the game proper. Just as well really, because from here on it gets better, much better.

It's a game shock

Although you spend the first level flying around having mouse-clicking fits, you spend the rest of the game (or at least as much of it as I've seen) walking around shooting lots of alien things. If you've ever played *Operation Wolf* or *Terminator: Arcade* you'll be well at home with the interface in *Creature Shock*. You move your space-dude alter-egoaround with the mouse and er, shoot things.

The left mouse button is for shooting with, and a click of the right mouse button activates your shield. When you're not scrapping with alien bods, a cursor in the middle of the screen indicates which directions you can move in. This interface is very easy to get to grips with and your space dude moves around very smoothly.

As you move around the giant alien asteroid thing, you will, of course, bump into lots of alien things. They all have different weak spots which you have to find and blast the hell out of. This isn't too difficult because if you look closely you'll see areas of the nasties that look noticeably different and these are usually the parts to aim at. The animation for all the creatures is absolutely superb and some of them look so realistic they are positively repulsive.

Even better looking is your space cadet hero bloke (i.e. you). When he's disposed of a particularly nasty bunch of aliens you get cut scenes which show him diving about dramatically in his space suit, performing somersaults, pointing his gun dangerously at nothing in particular, and generally looking super cool. When you first play the game (I mean from the second level on, forget the crap *Space Invaders* bit at the beginning), you could be forgiven for thinking it's a bit too simplistic. Initially, it seems to involve nothing more than walking around lots of tunnels shooting the odd alien, but as the ☞

IN PERSPECTIVE

Basically, *Creature Shock* is a first-person perspective shoot'em up. Here's how it compares with other games in the genre.

Doom 1 and 2

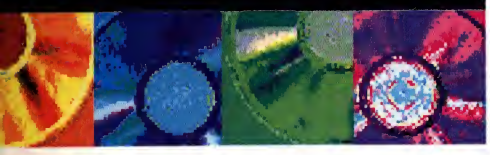
System Shock

Creature Shock

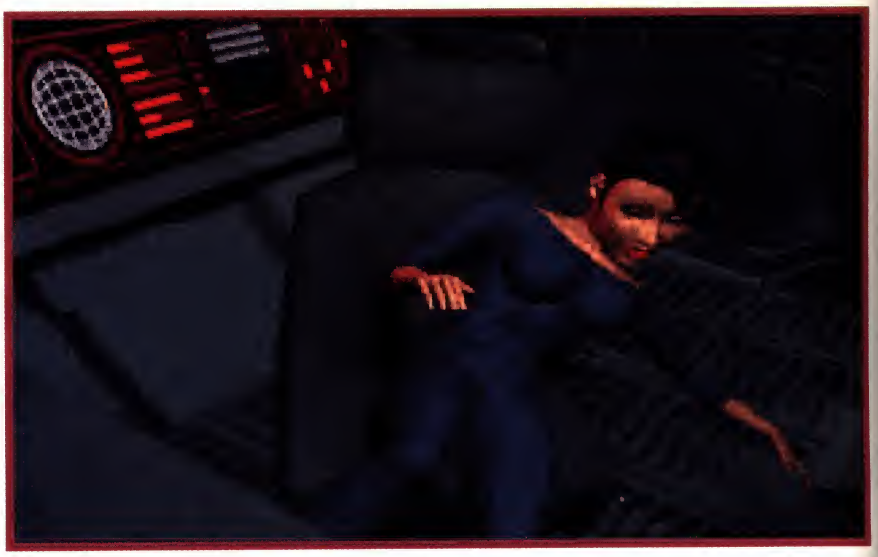
Terminator Rampage

Corridor 7

Creature Shock



(Right) The only survivor of the Earth catastrophe is a silicon-heavy babe on the appropriately-named SS Amazon, where zero gravity plays strange non-isometric tricks on her balance. And her posture.



☞ game progresses you are constantly faced with hordes of new aliens (some of them are a nightmare to get rid) and it gets increasingly harder to stay alive. Help comes in the form of power-ups which you'll find in containers hanging from the walls and when you grab one of these you'll find that you've suddenly got a lot healthier, or your gun has just got a lot more dangerous. So generally, *Creature Shock* is a much better CD shoot'-em-up than the current crop that we've seen but it's not perfect, not by a long shot.

"Half the time you end up clicking the mouse like mad in the hope you'll eventually hit something."

Bits missing shock

One part of the game that must definitely be filed away in the missed opportunity cabinet is the music. Considering the game itself is very brooding and atmospheric, the last thing you'd expect to hear as you're wandering around the tunnels looking over your shoulder, waiting for the arrival of the death-dealing alien which you just *know* is about pop up, is an absolutely crap, over-jolly, badly written, disco-type backing track. They could have had an absolutely amazing sound track for this game. *Creature Shock* is just crying out for sparse, moody, atmospheric melodies but what you get instead would not sound out of place in a Russ Abbot sketch. Another niggle is that you can easily get lost when you're trying to get to the end of a level. There are lots of twists and turns and you have to remember where you've been all the time. There is no auto-map so you are left with no choice but to get out the old pen and paper and map the bloody thing as you go along. Okay, the levels aren't very big but I thought we'd left the days of sitting in front of a computer game with a notepad behind. The reason this is so annoying is you only have one life and when you die you are sent back to the beginning of the level you're on. The only other problem I have with *Creature Shock* is the price. Fifty quid is a lot to spend on *any* game. My advice if you like the sound of *Creature Shock* and think it's definitely 'your thing', is to shop around. With a bit of luck you should be able to pick it up for about £35. Don't let the minor problems I've highlighted with the game put you off too much. Of all the CD action games we've seen over the last few months, *Creature Shock* is definitely one of the best. It looks absolutely amazing, it gets harder the further you get into it, and the levels are big enough to keep you occupied for at least a week or two. Try getting it for a lower price, though. Z

(Below) Your mission, should you accept it, is to follow the SS Amazon and invent some new underwear. This bra will self-destruct in ten seconds...

78

SCORE

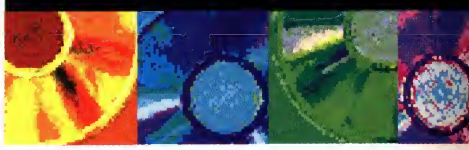
An engrossing, atmospheric 3D adventure game. Great graphics, absorbing levels, but lousy soundtrack.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb
Minimum Processor: 486DX
Hard Disk Space Required: 1.7Mb
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: SoundBlaster and compatibles, Roland, General Midi
Controls: Mouse

Price: £49.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Virgin **Tel:** 081 960 2255

CD-ROM REVIEW

Front Page Sports Baseball

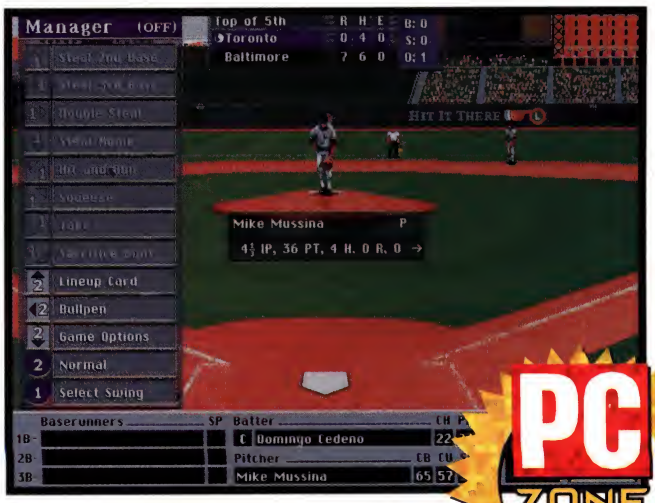


We thought we'd give *Front Page Sports Baseball* to Patrick McCarthy just so that he could do his "swinging bunt/cockney rhyming slang" joke again. But he didn't.

WHILE there are fewer cricket games available on the PC than there are humorous remarks in *The Vicar Of Dibley*, baseball simulations continue to proliferate with a pace only matched by disgraced Conservative MPs. *Front Page Sports Baseball (FPSB)* is brought to you by the makers of *Front Page Sports Football* (far and away the best American football game on the PC), and the same level of quality and attention to detail has gone into its creation.

Showing sound reasoning, they've looked carefully at every other leading baseball game around and "been influenced by" the best ideas from each. The batting and pitching selection process is identical to the definitive one used in *Hardball*, except it looks much better and more businesslike – in fact, the presentation throughout is immaculate. The fielding aids are very *Tony La Russa:* a circle appears on the ground where the ball will bounce. The higher the ball flies, the wider the area; as it drops, the circle gets smaller. Fielding controls will be familiar to anyone who's played any baseball game – switching between fielders, diving, jumping, catching and throwing are all intuitive. As well as that, they actually look good – outfielders even make that weird little pigeon-hop before launching the ball toward the cutoff man.

In fact, it's graphically outstanding, matching the sense of vast open spaces given by *Hardball*, and the clarity of *Tony La Russa*. You really get a sense of the distances that players have to throw the ball and the ball-flight is excellent, both with throws and sky-high fly balls, which stay in shot thanks to the view moving to frame the ball. The sound deserves a mention, too, for the digitised abuse from the home crowd when you're the visiting batsman, nice bat noises and even an authentic ball-hitting-glove sound.



(Above left) "Brains" Smith was famous for bringing a giant compass into play.

(Above right) The players would sometimes take on formations that almost looked like faces when seen from above.

(Left) "Pirate" Johnston would take advice from his lucky parrot.

Bat Out Of Hell

Like *FPS Football*, there are three levels of arcade complexity and a manage-only option, so that two-player games can be handicapped if one of you has the hand/eye co-ordination of a crispy cod steak. Needless to say, the statistical content is enormous, but the basic information is there for those who just want arcade fun.

For the heavy-duty player, there are customisable leagues and full career modes with players retiring and being replaced from minor leagues and amateur drafts. Because the licence is with the MLB Players' Association rather than the teams, player names are real but team nicknames are approximations. On the way is a data disk with the rest of the stadia and 48 old-time teams, from the days when real men played baseball on grass, dressed in natural fibres. This should be worth buying just to check out the players' nicknames, especially the likes of "Satchel" Paige, "Oil Can" Boyd and "Three Finger" Brown, famous for his imaginative application of linament. If you're thinking about buying a baseball game, this is the one.

It takes all the best bits from all the best games and ends up being the best.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb RAM

Minimum Processor: 386/33 (486/33 recommended)

Hard Disk Space Required: 18Mb plus 1Mb-4Mb per league

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

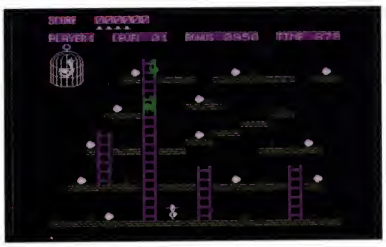
Sound Cards Supported: All major sound cards supported

Controls: Keyboard, joystick, mouse

Price: 44.99 **Release Date:** December

Publisher: Sierra **Tel:** 0734 303322

"Ah, those were the days, eh?" cried Gareth Ramsay, looking at Sierra's new platform thingy.



(Left) A great game, the same age, yes it's Chuckie Egg.

LODE RUNNER FOR WINDOWS

WATER FILTERS. You may not know this, but your brain is just like one. Three of us agreed on this – it would have been four if the forth hadn't been up getting the next round in. The thing is, though, just as water filters remove all traces of dirt, insects, elastoplast, etc., from tap water, your brain does this to your memories over the years. All the bad bits seem to magically disappear, and what are you left with? The "good" old days, that's what.

Well, to cut a long story short (*shorter, surely. Ed.*), I've been getting rather nostalgic over the last few days. Reliving the past, if you will. Sierra's new release *Lode Runner*, is much more than some new game – it's a piece of history!

My information, gleaned from Sierra's head-office, tells tales of the dark ages of Commodore 64s, zx Spectrums, and other such mythical creatures. These were the days of the *Lode Runner*. Sierra claim this was the first platform game ever. Blimey! So here it is, "*Lode Runner* for the 90s".

The story so far...

...Some mad monks apparently seem to have stolen all of the world's gems and trinkets, and have scattered said gems etc., around their underground kingdom. Oh no! But fear not, for you (a brave hero-type – again) are here to save the day. Collect each gem from each of the 150 levels to proceed (hmm, sounds familiar).

On all but the first few levels, an annoyance manifests in the form of "Little Red Jelly-Babies" – your would-be captors. A close (and I *do* mean close) examination of the screen grabs and you'll get the idea. These monks are not, fortunately for you, all too bright. Climb up... they'll climb up, climb down... and down they go. There's not much A.I. to speak of. The monks can be dealt with in a manner of ways – you start with a blaster which can blast holes in the floor (monks fall down these holes but do not die) and can then progress on to snares, bombs and many other tasty bits of warfare, too.

> "These monks are not, fortunately for you, all too bright... There's not much A.I. to speak of."

...And so to conclude

Every 15 levels a cut sequence takes place telling the story, but, unfortunately, this was not enough to keep my interest. Even the head-to-head options and the level builder just seem to me a wasted effort. (Let's be honest, it's not *Doom*. I can't really see people around the world swapping *Lode Runner* levels, can you?)

Really and truly, though, *Lode Runner* does manage to capture all the atmosphere of the original – but it has to be said: that was ten years ago. Ten years! That's a long time for computer games. There is far, far better value shareware available.

(Above) Blow up the monks with bombs. (Looks more like an orange segment to me.)

(Left) Yep, it's glasses on time – these sprites must be at least 5mm on my screen.

SCORE

50

It may have captured the original atmosphere, but its too little too late.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb
Minimum Processor: 486sx 25
Hard Disk Space Required: 12Mb
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: Any Windows sound card
Controls: Keys, joystick
Comments: Requires DOS3.3 and Windows 3.1
Price: £34.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Sierra **Tel:** 0734 303322

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WIN!

(Above right) Action abungo! Enemy troops have escaped! (Below right) I hope I didn't spoil their lunch – especially dessert. *(Give me strength – Ed.)*

IT'S NOT OFTEN that you get the opportunity to fly a helicopter, is it? Especially not a classic Bell 47 helicopter. For those of you who don't know what one is (i.e. most of you) this is the same as the ones they used in *M*A*S*H*). Well, thanks to the awfully nice chaps at Gremlin Interactive, we can offer you a 30-minute trial lesson in one of these incredible machines at East Midlands Helicopters, which is based in Costock in Leicestershire. You will also receive a free copy of the fantastic helicopter sim, *Desert Strike*. Ten runners-up will also receive a copy of *Desert Strike*.

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The Bell 47 helicopter made a number of appearances in which successful TV series?

- ☐ Dr Kildare
- ☐ M*A*S*H
- ☐ The Waltons

Question 2

The helicopter featured in *Desert Strike* is:

- ☐ A Bell 47
- ☐ A whirlybird
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Question 3

Gremlin has recently changed its name, adding which of the following suffixes?

- ☐ Interactive
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- Arcade Pool
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- Snooker's always on the telly
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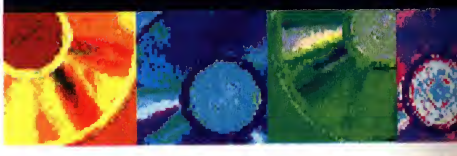


The earth is in trouble again...

RETRIBUTION

...but what's this? A bird? A plane? And what's it doing in Canada?

"This will make a change from Shareware," we told Mark Burgess. "Yes," he said. "It's no good." Now he's out for retribution.

BEWARE OF ALIENS bearing gifts. It's a lesson as old as Troy, but one that has been forgotten in the 24th Century. Earth is dying, buffeted by war and starvation. Just in time a race of aliens appears, like the cavalry. They are the Krellans. OK, they look like praying mantises but they bring technology, medicine and peace. Under their guidance, the Earth enters a new era of harmony, plenty and benign colonisation. It sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? It is.

A Krellan rescue pod is picked up by the space station Aphelion. Inside is a woman and the medics give her a once over. But the memory scan reveals more than her blood group. It shows the Krellans are farming the inhabitants of Earth. The medical advances, the new agriculture – it's not altruistic: the Krellans are fattening up the human race like geese. And they have jammed communications between the space station and Earth. Can the space station warn Earth in time?

It's a cute alien thing come to solve our problems. Bit insect-like isn't he?

"It all sounds good doesn't it? But like the Krellans, the game isn't as good as it sounds."

It depends. It depends on you, because you must strike at the Krellan bases, destroying the missile sites and jamming equipment. It all sounds good, doesn't it? But like the Krellans, this game isn't as good as it sounds.

Retribution comes on CD, which means that you're treated to some excellent animation. The opening scenes are impressive, as are the links between the action. But like so many CD games, it goes wrong from there. Like so many others, the cinematic sequences have all been coded, and everyone thinks they're great. But a week before the product ships someone says: "Damn, we forgot to write the game."

Cut to space station Aphelion many years later.

What you get after all the build up is a simple shoot-'em-up, not that different from old favourites like *Wing Commander*.

Watch my lips

You are based in the space station where the discovery of the Krellans' treachery was made. Log on to start a career. The base has various people you *can* talk to and some you *must* talk to if you're to make any sense of what's going on. The commander and the engineer are the ones you'll spend most time with. The engineer sneers a lot, but since he can't move his lips in time to his speech, you can laugh at him behind his back.

There is a training simulator for you to prepare yourself for actual combat, though playing darts after a dozen pints would be ☞

A Krellan rescue pod appears.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Gremlin Interactive has hit some real highs in its time, but this sure ain't one of them.

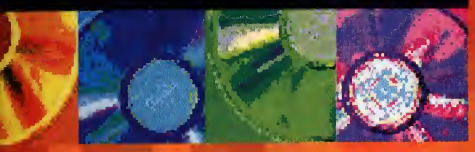
Retribution

Protostar

Reunion

X-Wing

Retribution



Inside is what looks like a human. A memory scan is called for.

Coo! It's a Krellan theme park.

The Krellan is a shape changer! She's coming round! Shoot her!

Off through a Pink Floyd-type wormhole to save the world.

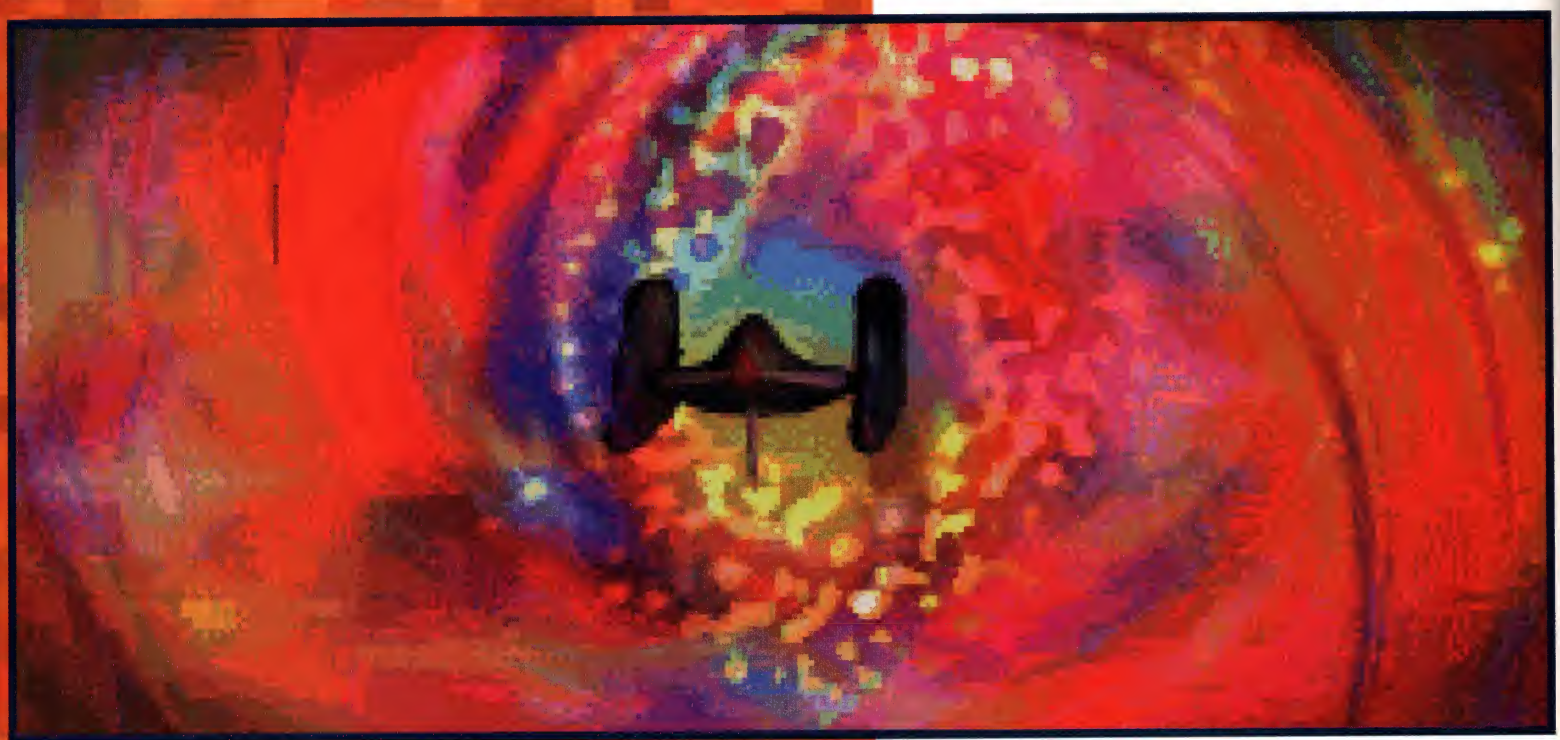
(Below) Full info on the Krellan ships – especially for all you plane spotters out there.

☞ better training. You also have a computer which will give you details of your past performance. The computer is used to save and restore games. There is another computer, the reference computer, which gives details on Federation and enemy craft and installations. There is also a ship's log which records the top tips of the engineer. I found this useful because I often cut the engineer off in mid flow. A tactics log goes farther in giving vital info on your missions.

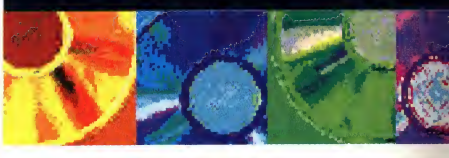
You fly your ship over alien landscapes, shooting installations and the fighters that defend them. You dodge missiles. When all your targets are destroyed and the mission is accomplished, it's back to a mother ship for re-equipment and the next sortie.

Aces high, Retribution low

By itself, none of this is bad. The success of the *Aces* series (*Aces of the Pacific*, *Aces over Europe*) depends on this kind of structure: start off a career, play mission one, back to base, briefing, mission two, and so on. But in the *Aces* series you get some kind of impression of realism. *Retribution* has no feeling of speed or responsiveness.



Retribution



(Below) The stroppy engineer will sneer at you, but give you useful tips.

(Above) Why go back to the mothership when you can take out an oil refinery?

While you are on a mission, you are keenly aware that you are moving a cursor over a flat screen. The landscape is dark and lacking in detail. You seem to fly over hills with no real feeling that you have gained height The targets are blocks studded into the hills. There are no more detailed than the stuff in *Tau Ceti* on the Amstrad.

The ship is sluggish and difficult to control. It has masses of inertia and is as easy to steer as an oil tanker. Krellan fighters, on the other hand, are nippy to an enviable degree. After a few hours playing this game I realised the only sensible tactic was to run away. You have two main types of weapon: lasers and missiles. The lasers are of the pulse type and only good against other ships. Ground targets need to be attacked with missiles. These missiles are unguided – a bit like torpedoes. This sort of weaponry belongs to World War II. The game is supposed to be set in the 25th Century, for pity's sake. I mean we had guided missiles in the 50s.

"After a few hours playing this game I realised the only sensible tactic was to run away."

The ship is controlled by joystick or mouse, and Gremlin reckons a mouse is better. I don't like a mouse for action games but I can use one – even in *Doom*. In *Retribution* I was constantly fighting for control and got burns from the mouse mat. The one thing you do not need in an action game is a sloppy interface: the control should be transparent. There were times when I was reminded of the dreadful *Terminator 2029* in the way you could be killed no matter how good you were because nothing would respond fast enough.

I wanted to like this game. Gremlin has had its lows, but I have always thought that a firm that can produce *Zool* has a lot going for it. *Retribution* has been described as a new direction for Gremlin. It was a mistake. *Retribution* isn't a good shoot-'em-up and it isn't a good strategy game. It's not *Protostar*; it's not *Reunion*; it isn't even *Wing Commander*. With a little more thought this could have been a good game, but to be honest it is fundamentally flawed.

(Left) Wallop! Another ground installation ripe for redevelopment.

(Below) Missile site in sight. Gouraud? Who's he?

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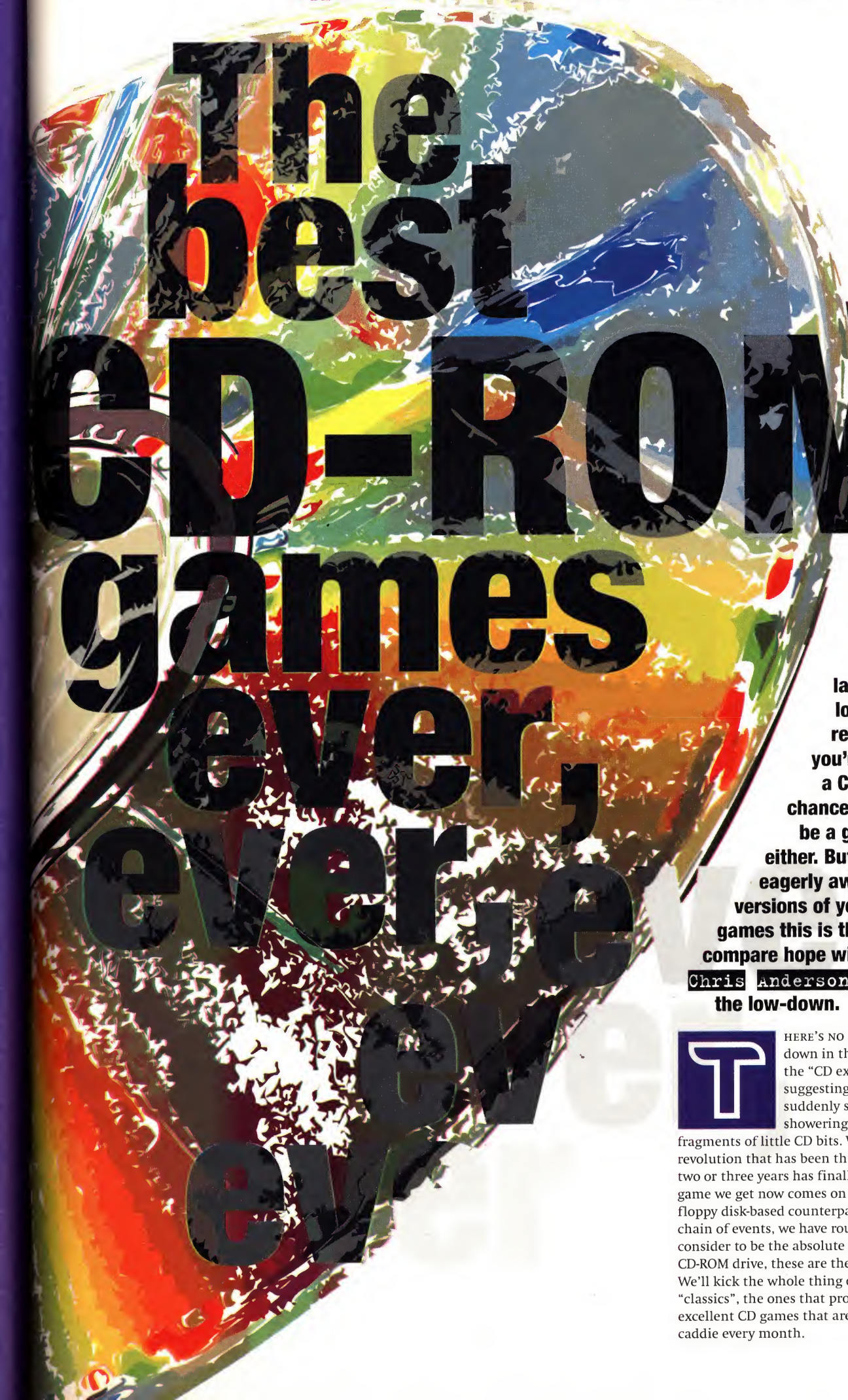

The best CD-ROM games ever, ever, ever

If you think caddie is something you put tea in and FMV is a record label with a sweet-looking dog on it, read no further – you're obviously not a CD-ROMer and chances are you won't be a games player either. But if you've been eagerly awaiting the CD versions of your favourite games this is the place to compare hope with hype. Chris Anderson gives the low-down.

THERE'S NO DOUBT about it, 1994 will go down in the annals of history as the year of the "CD explosion". Not that we're suggesting compact discs everywhere suddenly spontaneously combusted, showering their unsuspecting owners in fragments of little CD bits. What we mean is the CD revolution that has been threatening to arrive for the last two or three years has finally happened. Virtually every game we get now comes on CD, and fewer and fewer have floppy disk-based counterparts. To celebrate this merry chain of events, we have rounded up the CD games we consider to be the absolute best of the bunch. If you own a CD-ROM drive, these are the CDs you simply *must* have. We'll kick the whole thing off with a look at the early CD "classics", the ones that provided inspiration for the excellent CD games that are now fighting for a place in your caddie every month. ☞

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

There was a time, not so very long ago, when full-motion video clips were but a glint in many a programmer's eye and the term "interactive movie" had yet to emerge. For many, it was a happy, uncomplicated time when adventure games were simple point-and-click affairs where you moved little Liverpudlian-type people around the screen and you knew where you stood with your arcade shoot-'em-ups. The "classics" in this section changed all that, with their fancy video clips and posho people-speaking-for-real bits – but how do they stand up against today's multimedia spectaculars? We take a look at three highly successful CD games of yesteryear and see if they're still worth shelling out good cash for.

Dune

Rebel Assault

7th Guest

7th Guest

DEPENDING ON how you look at it, *7th Guest* is either a sexy-looking, challenging and engrossing adventure/puzzle game, or an over-hyped, over-expensive pile of old twaddle. This is because certain clever bods played it, walked through the game from beginning to end in a few hours and promptly told all their mates it was crap.

Other bods played it, however, got completely stuck after about half an hour and left begging letters on Compuserve asking people to tell them the answers to the puzzles and generally give them a life. So, I suppose whether you'll like it or not depends on how thick you are, or aren't as the case may be.

As far as the graphics are concerned, if you can forgive the jerkiness of the movement, you will almost definitely be wowed by the rich, luxuriant scenery graphics. This was also the first game to feature the now dreaded miniature, full-motion video bits and use digitised speech to tart up the whole experience.

Whatever way you look at it, *7th Guest* is something of a landmark for CD adventure games, and if you're a saddo, anorak-toting, adventure-game connoisseur, you'll be wanting it in your collection ('specially if you can get hold of the arty-farty limited edition which came in a box that looked spookily like a proper book).

REVIEWED IN: Issue 4
SCORE: 60%

Rebel Assault

OPINION WAS firmly divided on this one when it first appeared. Proudly proclaiming itself to be a heart-stopping arcade game which brought the tension and atmosphere of the *Star War* movies to your desktop, it was loved to death by half of the PC mags and treated with scorn and derision by the other half. Just like *7th Guest*, some people thought it was too easy to complete and some people didn't. Regardless, *Rebel Assault* is a stunning technological achievement, and the action scenes will have you on the edge of your seats every time. Most of the battles are fast, hectic and exciting, and the graphics have to be seen to be believed.

We ran this game on one of the machines on our stand at the Live '94 show and people were crammed around it itching to have a go. It's the kind of game you sit down with, honestly intending to have a "quick go" and end up playing with the thing until you either finish it or get hopelessly stuck, whichever comes first.

There are several interlinking scenes lifted from the movies which make the whole experience even more atmospheric. Taken purely as an out-and-out arcade blast, *Rebel Assault* blows the likes of *Microcosm* and co., out the window with consummate ease. It may not last very long for some of you, but while it does you'll love every second of it.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 11
SCORE: 93%

Rebel Assault

Dune

VIRGIN WERE the first company to show the world how to take a brilliant game and make it even better with the CD version of this stupendously brilliant strategy game. Loosely based on Frank Herbert's *Dune* books, the game stars you as Paul Atreides, master strategist for your Imperial Family in their battle with evil baddies the Harkonnens.

Set on the desert planet of Arrakis (otherwise known as Dune), your objectives are to mine the life-giving mineral Spice while at the same time seeing off the Harkonnen lot. The plot is extremely gripping, all the characters in the game speak, and the whole thing kicks off with a totally cool scene taken straight from the movie.

Dune is the sort of game you have to play two or three times and get hopelessly thrashed at before you figure out exactly how to win. This is more of a challenge than an irritation, and the whole affair is addictive in the extreme. From start to finish, the game positively oozes atmosphere and the excellent vocal delivery from the actors who did the voice-overs drags you into the plot until you're completely engrossed in everything that's going on. If resource management-type strategy games are your thing, you simply, absolutely, *must* buy this game.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 7
SCORE: 82%

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ULTIMATE ADVENTURES

Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis

Let's face it, adventure games and compact discs were made for each other. The ability to store gigantic amounts of data on compact disc opened up a whole new world for software houses who saw they could store outrageously large graphic and speech files on CD and give their adventures an eerily realistic feel not unlike that of a real movie. They celebrated this new discovery by inventing the term (all cringe and get violently sick) "Interactive Movie". Cue zillions of unbelievably shite games (*Quantum Gate*, *JumpRaven* etc.), using the aforementioned term as an excuse to produce boring, non-interactive dung on CD. Thankfully, the software houses have finally begun to get their act together and we are now beginning to see some truly excellent adventures on CD. Here are the best of them.

Sam and Max Hit the Road

Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis

THIS IS A stonkingly good adventure game with authentic Indie-type voice-overs on top of it. It was a brilliant game on disk to start with, and the updated CD version, with full speech for all the characters, is even better.

Your objective in the game is to help Indiana (accompanied by a token heroine) to get to the bottom of some shady goings-on surrounding several ancient Nazi artefacts. Unlike most common or garden point-and-click adventures, there are three ways to play the game and the storyline changes depending on which path you take. You can play it purely as an arcade adventure where your success largely depends on how adept you are at pummelling the daylights out of your adversaries. You can opt to undertake the quest with some female company (in the shape of the aforementioned obligatory heroine) and she'll give you clues to solving some of the puzzles. You can also play the lonely, enigmatic intellectual and go through the whole thing yourself, solving mind-warpingly tricky puzzles along the way. Yes, this game has something for everybody: the hard nut who just wants to bop his way to victory; the saddo romantic who wants to fall in love with his co-star; and that bloke in Great Yarmouth who manages to complete the *Sunday Times* cryptic crossword every week without fail.

Truly then, this is a well-rounded adventure game experience with cool talkie-bits to boot. If you haven't got it, run off and buy it now. It'll keep you off the streets for an absolute age.

REVIEWED IN: Not Reviewed
SCORE: N/A

Return to Zork

REMEMBER THOSE crappy old *Zork* text adventures that certain sad, lonely individuals considered to be deep, complex and a veritable hoot? Well, this is the latest one in the saga except, er, it's not a text adventure at all. It's a fully-blown, posh multimedia thing with people speaking in it and full-motion video clips popping up all over the shop. Anyone who has played the Access adventures like *Amazon* and *Under a Killing Moon* will know what to expect. Digitised backgrounds and "actors" are the order of the day as you journey through the mystical land of Zork, solving puzzles, engaging in friendly chit-chat with the locals and playing lots of mini-games along the way.

This is a totally non-linear adventure with many sub-plots so you never really get stuck in any one place for very long. The engrossing plot, clever puzzles and additional mini-games make this one of the best CD adventures to date.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 10
SCORE: 90%

Sam and Max Hit the Road

Sam and Max Hit the Road

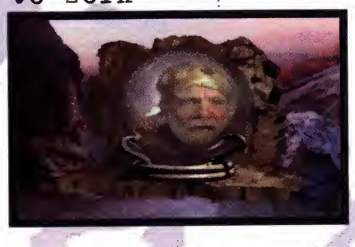
WITH THE POSSIBLE exception of *Day of the Tentacle*, which tried very hard to be funny and wasn't, LucasArts' adventure games have been the absolute business and this one is arguably the best one of the lot.

Based around the wacky antics of freelance police, Sam the dog and his mate Max the rabbit, this is the most chortlesome, giggle-inducing adventure we've played since *Secret of Monkey Island 2*. As you take the lovable duo on a tour around America in pursuit of Bruno the Bigfoot and Trixie the Giraffe-Necked girl, you'll discover a crazy cartoon-type world full of excellent humour, all backed up with a superb musical score and excellent speech for the characters in the game.

This is the definitive LucasArts adventure game and if you haven't got it, there really is no excuse for not dashing out to the shops and buying it immediately.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 16
SCORE: 93%

Return to Zork



Under a Killing Moon

YOU CAN ALMOST guarantee that any adventure game that comes from Access will have more digitised imagery per pixel than any other adventure game in the whole, wide world. They've always done it, even *Countdown* (a very hard, very ace, early Access adventure game) had lots of digi-peeps and speech in it. Their latest release, *Under a Killing Moon*, is no exception, in fact it goes even further by introducing a large amount of "Interactive Movieness".

You play Tex Murphy, a private detective who gets himself into all sorts of amusing problematic situations as he attempts to right wrongs, solve crimes (and lots of puzzles too, obviously) and eventually emerge as the undisputed King of Detectiveness.

The video clips are wildly impressive (honest), the puzzles are hard but not ridiculously difficult, and the whole game oozes quality. If you think Access adventures are what life's all about then go off and buy this one now because it's the best one by far.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 19
SCORE: 92%

Ecstatica

Gabriel Knight

SIERRA TOOK time off from telling poncey tales about kings and in-jokey tales about people messing about in space to take their first excursion into the real world and produced *Gabriel Knight*, an atmospheric and moody adventure.

The graphics, while not particularly stunning, are suitably dark and mysterious and suit the game's atmosphere perfectly. The speech in this game is particularly well delivered too.

You play Tim Curry, a bookshop owner who takes it upon himself to investigate a series of voodoo murders in New Orleans. As you take Tim on his heroic chase after the murdering rotters, he discovers things in the present which in turn shed light on his own sinister past. In true Sierra style, the emphasis is on storytelling and this is what they do best. *Gabriel Knight* is a gripping, atmospheric adventure and the puzzles are testing enough to keep even know-it-all smart-arse adventure game veterans busy for ages.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 14
SCORE: 90%

Gabriel Knight

Little Big Adventure

Little Big Adventure

Little Big Adventure

ADELINE SOFTWARE, the company behind the *Alone In the Dark* games, have taken time off from the series to produce something completely different. That's not to say it's not an adventure game, it's just that this particular adventure is like nothing you have ever seen in the genre to date.

You play Twinsen, an odd dude from the planet Quelch who has been given the unenviable task of thwarting the evil Dr Funfrock. The game is played out over 12 huge chapters with over 40 different worlds, and sports possibly the most inventive and impressive sprite animation for adventure game characters ever. The interface is ridiculously easy to use and you have full control over your character's personality so you can choose whether you want him to act aggressively or in a nice chummy manner in any given situation, and whether his body movements are athletic or furtive (you can get him to tippy-toe around to avoid discovery).

This is one of those brilliant "Why didn't anyone think of that before?" ideas and it adds a whole new dimension to adventure gaming. This is one of the most original adventures we have ever seen, ever. For the full gen, read the review in last month's issue.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 21
SCORE: 93%

Ecstatica

ALSO REVIEWED last issue, and not entirely dissimilar to *Little Big Adventure*, this game also sports superb animation and arcade-style combat sequences.

Set in the spooky village of Tirich, *Ecstatica* gives you an enormous game environment to explore, countless monsters and weirdoes to interact with (and beat the crap out of) and, just like *LBA*, has glorious animation for all the characters.

Player interaction is as simple as it can possibly be, with no cluttered inventory to keep track of, and *Ecstatica* avoids the Sierra approach to puzzle presenting (i.e. you don't get incredibly stuck every half an hour and end up totally bored) by giving you more or less total freedom to move around, constantly discovering new things. *Ecstatica* is an excellent example of how to produce a great-looking, engrossing adventure game without having to stick lots of multimedia bits in it to pad it out. A must buy for adventure fans.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 21
SCORE: 93%

Star Trek 25th Anniversary

Star Trek 25th Anniversary

TREKKIES EVERYWHERE were understandably chuffed to see this adventure which starred all their favourite STAR TREK persons solving puzzles, fighting nasties, talking a lot (in true digi-speak) and lots of cool stuff like that. As adventures go, *Star Trek 25th...* is pretty much standard fare. The game is separated into different missions, each one starting with some suitably melodramatic life or death scenario or other, and you are left to storm in there and sort it out.

Rather than the game increasing in difficulty as you go on, the puzzles are a bit of a mixed bag. Some of the missions are ridiculously easy, and others are well hard (in terms of difficulty, that is). This works surprisingly well. You often get really tricky missions which take a fair while to work out and then afterwards are "rewarded" with an easy peasy one which makes you think you're really clever and a dab hand at the old adventure lark. The music and sound effects are pretty cool and the voice-overs are suitably realistic and *Star Trek*-y. This is a good adventure, if not the best in the world, but needless to say, no *Star Trek* fan should be without it.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 10
SCORE: 79%

ACTION STATIONS

Compact discs may well be the perfect platform for talkie adventures, but we are now starting to see games of all descriptions turning up on CD which are equally worthy of your attention. Take one last longing look at that wad in your wallet before we show you the games that are about to relieve you of it.

Battle Isle 2

Magic Carpet

Magic Carpet

Battle Isle 2

System Shock

Battle Isle 2

Of the five zillion squillion hex-grid-based war games out there, the *Battle Isle* series is the only one that manages to create a complex game environment while still remaining accessible to more "casual" strategists. Many people are understandably put off by over-complex "serious" wargames that take an age to get to grips with and have crap graphics. *Battle Isle* takes the stigma out of the genre by offering an intuitive "wargamer friendly" interface and decent graphics to boot. The choice of units you can call into battle is overwhelming and the variety of terrains you get to fight it out with the enemy on is enormous. Once you get to grips with the game system, you'll become totally absorbed in the whole thing and probably won't want to do anything else for bloody ages.

For the CD release of *Battle Isle 2*, Blue Byte went right over the top on presentation, bringing in an excellent 3D-representation of the battle field as you and your adversary cheerfully blow each other to bits. This is the definitive CD war game and deserves to be bought by all who have a strategic streak running through their gaming metabolism.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 14
SCORE: 91%

Magic Carpet

There are very few games in this world that have the cynical journalist types who frequent our office crowding around a PC and blurting out "bloody hell" and "smaaaart" and other such juvenile comments. If any game can be judged on visuals alone, then *Magic Carpet* has no equals. None! The graphics in this game really have to be seen to believed. You and your trusty carpet glide around the most gorgeous landscapes ever seen in a computer game. If you were to call it anything at all (for pigeon-holing purposes purely designed to upset PR people at software houses) you would have to be honest and call it a shoot-'em-up. It's undoubtedly a shoot-'em-up with a difference, though. *Magic Carpet* gives you probably the only chance you'll ever get to fly about on a state-of-the-art carpet thing using lots of cool magic spells to take a pop at everyone you meet. The gameplay seems a little basic at first but it becomes a real challenge on the later levels.

This is definitely one of the best games we have ever seen and will not disappoint anyone with even a vague interest in arcade/strategy-type games.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 21
SCORE: 96%

System Shock

System Shock

Hailed unimaginatively by people like us as "*Ultima Underworld* In Space" and even more unimaginatively by other people as "That Game That Looks A Bit Like *Doom*", *System Shock* is, er, neither of these things, actually. It's much more intricate and involving than *Doom* and refreshes the parts of RPG haters that *Underworld* simply couldn't reach.

Set in a (yawn, yawny, yawn) abandoned space station, *System shock* has you roaming around enormous levels, picking up all manner of hi-tech gadgetry, killing all manner of weirdy space things, and generally having a whale of a time.

The graphics are smart, the sound effects and soundtrack are the business, the CD version has lots of extra talkie bits and the dazzling array of power-ups you find along the way will keep your interest to the very end. It doesn't have the instant "kill everyone and see lots of blood splashing everywhere" appeal of the *Doom* games, but for long-term playability it's a much safer bet.

This is without a doubt Origin's finest hour to date and... look, just buy it, okay?

REVIEWED IN: Issue 20
SCORE: 95%

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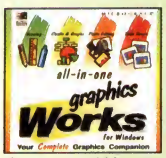

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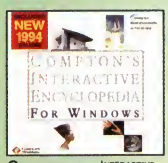

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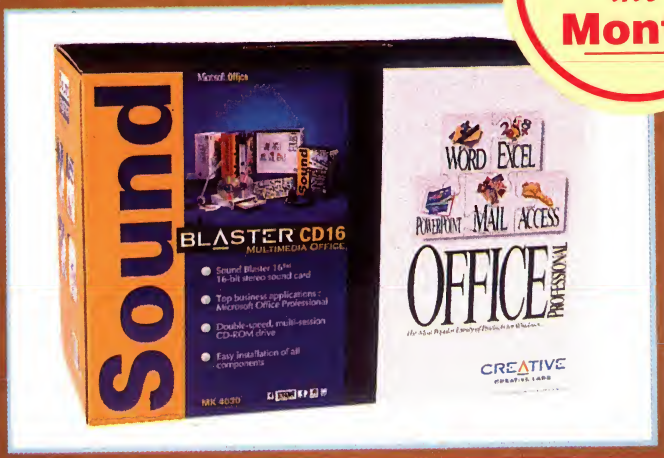

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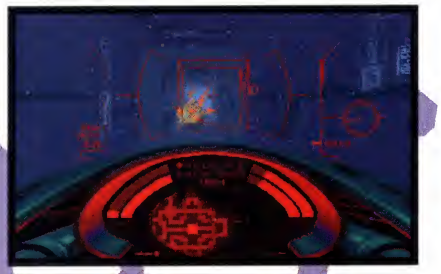
Inferno



Inferno

PGA Tour Golf 486

US Navy Fighters

Inferno

INFERNO IS basically an arcade blast with a bit of man management chucked in for good measure. What lifts it above other arcadey shooters is its excellent combat system and superb graphics. In terms of style, it's a bit like *TIE Fighter* except the action isn't quite as hectic and the graphics are way, way better. There are also different ways to play it. You can take on the whole scenario, planning, as well as shooting, your way to victory (with CD movie-type bits setting the scene as you go) or you can just say to hell with it and go for arcade mode which entails, as you can imagine, blowing everything you come across to bits. The missions are varied and the action is edge-of-the-seat stuff. Your ship moves very smoothly around the playing area too (providing you've at least a 486DX 33).

Inferno is an action-packed combat sim and with 700 missions to play with, you'll never come across the same scenario twice.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 20
SCORE: 88%

PGA Tour Golf 486

OF ALL THE golf games, in all the world, this is the only one that can claim to be "'CD enhanced". Although the CD version doesn't differ significantly in terms of gameplay to the multitude of other PGA Tour games, it boasts courses which, due to the miracle of digitisation, are graphically identical to their real-life counterparts. If that's not enough to get you would-be golfers squealing with delight, it looks amazing too. This may not be the *best* golf game available par se (for sheer gameplay golf purists may prefer *Links 386*) and so you might be wondering what it's doing in our *Best ever CD's round-up...*, but it's the only CD that has sound bits etc., and anyway, it's my feature so I'll put it in if I want to, so there.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 20
SCORE: 91%

US Navy Fighters

US Navy Fighters

FROM THE creators of *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* comes the most mouth-watering, graphically superb, action-packed, CD bits-packed flight simulation ever.

You are a daring, dashing Navy pilot on board the aircraft carrier Eisenhower. All the usual things that go wrong with the world in these sort of flight sims (namely, people pissing each other off and declaring war etc.,) are, surprisingly enough, all going wrong in this one as well. It's up to you, then, to don a silly helmet and sort them all out.

Apart from looking absolutely amazing, *US Navy Fighters* has the audacity to sound totally cool as well, leaving trillions of disk-based sims miles behind. The campaign option is played out over a massive 50 missions in which you get to blow up tanks, ships and lots of other stuff besides.

This game sets new standards for CD simulations. If flight sims are your thing, what are you waiting for? Get yourself off to your local software store and buy it now.

REVIEWED IN: Issue 22
SCORE: 90%

Hyper Hardware

So you've gone out and bought all our recommended games and suddenly remembered you haven't got a CD-ROM drive. Fear not. If you missed our multimedia feature in the last issue, here are the drives we recommend.

Aztech CDA. ☎ 99. 0734 814121

Toshiba XM3501B Quad-speed for rich people ☎ 495. 081 390 1211

Panasonic CR-562. ☎ 120. 0344 853913

ALIVE IN '95

Plans are afoot for some mega-tastic releases next year when CD-only games will be the rule rather than the exception. To whet your appetite, here are the ones that look like making the headlines early next year.

Alone in the Dark 3

The Dig

Dark Forces

Full Throttle

Harvester

Harvester will be a CD adventure talkie with real, proper arcade bits. The game features about 116 digitised persons and will be out at the beginning of next year.

Alone In The Dark 3

The third incarnation of one of the most successful games of all time is nearly upon us and it promises to be bigger, better, sexier and more CD-like than its predecessors. See the preview in this issue.

Dark Forces

Star Wars meets *Doom* (or is it the other way around?). Either way, it looks stonk-tastic and will give us the perfect excuse to make even more *Doom* comparisons when it arrives. Hurrah!

Wing Commander 3

It's costing four million dollars to make, it's got loads of famous actor types in it, and it's going to be even more *Wing Command*-y than, er, the other *Wing Commander*'s. Smart.

Full Throttle

Undisputed masters of the revered art of adventure game making, LucasArts are about to honour us with their latest creation. Being their first CD-only game, it will of course have a digitised musical score, full speech throughout and, knowing LucasArts, it will probably be an absolute winner on the gameplay front too. Roll on '95.

11th Hour

The long-awaited sequel to *7th Guest* is in development (still) but should hopefully be with us early next year. Will it be as spooky as the first one? Will it still jerk all over the shop (or haunted house, as it were) every time you move around? You'll just have to wait until next year to find out.

Phantasmagoria

Sierra's new adventure promises to be outrageously gory, horrific and full of squidgy bits and could provide serious competition for *11th Hour* when it comes it out. From what we've seen this could one of *the* big games of next year.

Bioforge

Here comes interactive movie number two million and six. This time you control a half-man, half-cyborg called Lex whose duty it is to dispose of hordes of aliens.

It has stunning graphics and looks like being another hit for Electronic Arts when it comes out at the end of this year.

The Dig

The joint skills of movie maestro Stephen Spielburg and adventure experts LucasArts are combining to produce the "ultimate" space adventure.

A team of explorers are accidentally transported to an alien world and have to search the planet and find the necessary technology to get them home.

The Dig will be released in the first quarter of next year.

Flight Unlimited

This is an utterly fantastic-looking flight sim from Looking Glass Technologies which promises to be as realistic as it is, er, visualistic. At the moment it's a "proper" flight sim with no cannons or missiles to play with (boo), but there will be a combat version next year (hooray).

Quake

The creators of *Doom* are turning their hands to an entirely different type of game. *Quake* hasn't got any guns in it but you will be able to play a Thor-like character who gets to clobber lots of people with a hammer. We don't know much more than that because it's all top secret, so secret in fact that we don't have any screen shots to show you but we're assured it will look absolutely fab.

Duncan MacDonald checks out the world of cut-price games.

What do YOU think about budget games? Generally speaking? It'll probably be along the same lines as most other people, I reckon. I conducted a brief vox pop in the Virgin Megastore, just to see if my suspicions were correct – and they were. The question posed was as above: "What do you think about Budget games?" And the replies? Here's a sample:

"They're shit, innit."

"They're games nobody bought at full price an' that."

"Stupid old blokes in raincoats go for them."

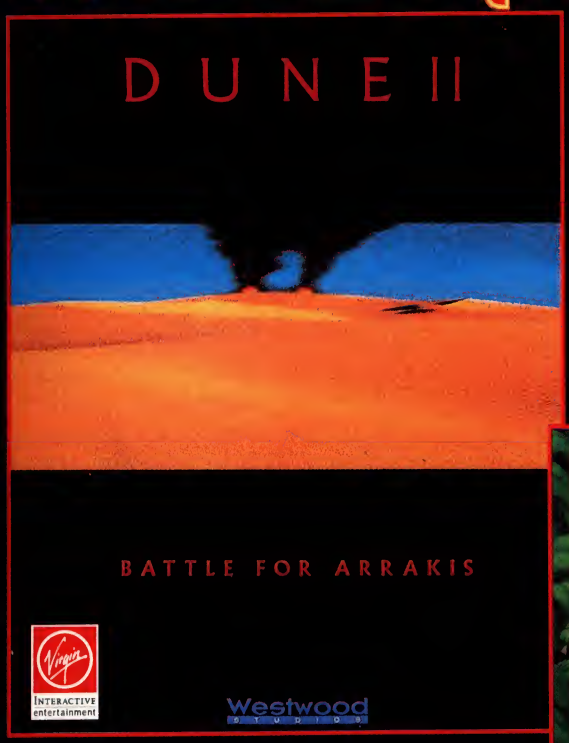
"Buying budget games is like buying your clothes in Millets."

"95 per cent are crap, 5 per cent are average."

And on it went. But is it true? Let's find out now, in a mega round-up of PC games currently available for seventeen quid or less. At the end of each genre I'll pick a winner, a loser, and one that's just sort of horrible in some way.

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

JOIN THE SQUAD... PLAY THE PC HITS



DUNE II BATTLE FOR ARRAKIS

He who controls the spice.... controls the universe.
Behold the planet Arrakis, known as Dune - land of sand and home of the spice 'Melange'. The spice controls the empire - whoever controls Dune controls the spice. The Emperor has proposed a challenge - 'The House that produces the most spice will control Dune, there are no territories...and no rules of engagement.' Vast armies have arrived. Now three Houses fight for control of Dune. Only one House will prevail. Your Battle for Arrakis begins NOW.....

"..the best strategy game ever!... gorgeous graphics, incredible music & sound effects." PC FORMAT
"Put it on your must have list immediately" PC HOME 94%

14.99

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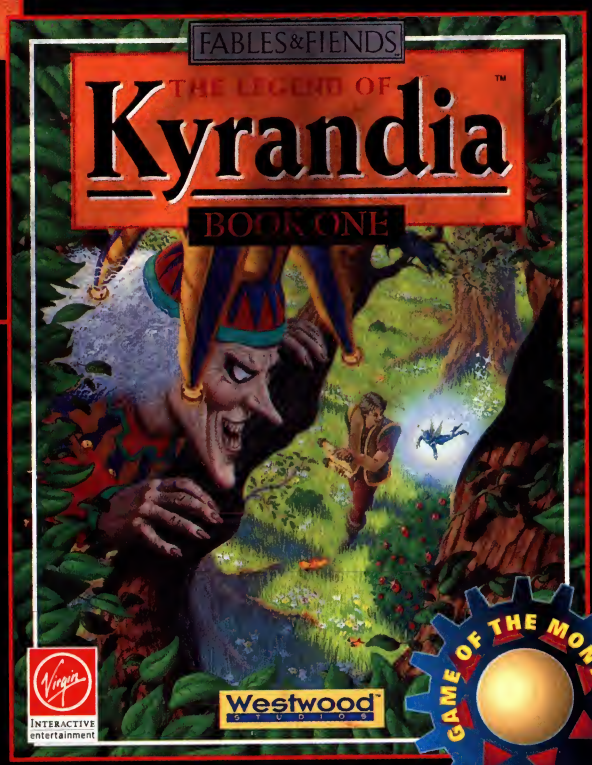
DUNE II



LEGEND OF KYRANDIA

ENTER A LAND WHERE MAGIC IS REAL!

Kyrandia is a land of dark mysterious forests and sleeping dragons. A fantasy land where rubies grow on trees and magic abounds. Who would imagine that a land so idyllic would lead to murder? Some say that the court jester Malcolm was mad to begin with. Others that it was his burning desire to possess the precious Kyragem that slowly unhinged his mind and led him to slay the peaceful King William, the sole protector of the powerful gemstone that is the source of all magic in the land of Kyrandia. As the rightful prince of Kyrandia, you must pursue the elusive Malcolm to recover the Kyragem. Only then will you be able to reclaim the throne and restore harmony to the land of Kyrandia.

"The graphics are superb... very pretty... a fascinating game". PC REVIEW

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CAR AND DRIVER

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ECSTASY ON WHEELS!

Test drive and race the car of your dreams in the Premier Driving Simulation. High Performance cars - Ferrari F40, Porsche 959, Lamborghini Countach, Lotus Esprit Turbo, 1957 Ferrari Testarossa, Mercedes C11 prototype racer and many more! Challenging roads, racetracks and parking lots - California Highway 1, Arkansas 7, Monterey Raceway, Autocross Course, San Dimas Mall Parking Lot, Drag Strip, EA Speedway. Incredible technology - 3D polygon, gourad shading and bitmap overlays for unsurpassed realism. Head to head option via network, modem or datalink. Choose to go off-road or turn 180° into oncoming traffic!

"You're in for a treat - the game is terrific" PC REVIEW

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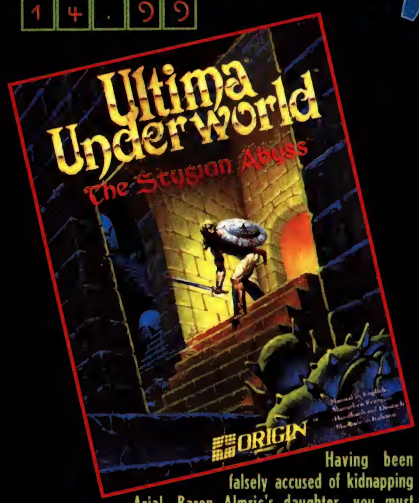

Having been falsely accused of kidnapping Arial, Baron Almric's daughter, you must survive the dangers of the Abyss and find the villain who abducted her.

* A true 3-D environment. Move smoothly and continuously through the first virtual reality dungeon.
* Explore nearly 25 miles of winding passages, gaping chasms and underground rivers.
* Automapping - keeps track of your location and marks where each important character or landmark is found.
* Thrilling combat and magic!

"exhilarating 3-D game-play"

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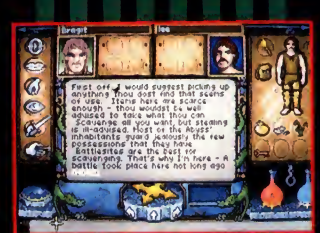

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

Hit Squad

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STRATEGY

Harpoon £14.99 Action 16

You can tell how old this viewed-from-above global war game is because it's subtitled "The final war at sea: NATO versus USSR". Still, eh? It's not to my taste, I'll admit, but Tim Ponting (*PC Zone* publisher) swears by it. If you're *not* a propeller head, though, maybe steer clear – it's hard work.

Patriot £14.99 Action 16

From the Harpoon people, this is a Gulf War simulator – you're in charge of the land-based forces. It's a pile of old cack apparently, because not only is it impossible to understand and control, but it's also bugged to jiggery. Avoid, whether you're a propeller head or not.

Air Bucks 1.2 £14.99 Impressions

Build your own global airline empire à la Richard Branson. Or rather, don't, because this game is useless. It says on the front of the box "New Improved Version". What it maybe ought to say instead is "New Marginally Less Appalling Version". Don't be sucked in by the shots on the back.

Realms £14.99 Hit Squad

It's a *Populous*-y-style affair: build a kingdom from an isometric viewpoint, with battles and so forth. The interface is a bit clumsy and it's a rather a slow game, but hey, it's not too bad – it's certainly involving if you persevere – and the graphics are fine, if derivative. Average.

Railroad Tycoon £14.99 Action 16

A classic. The viewed-from-above EGA graphics may take you back a few squillion years, but the gameplay remains intact to this day. You connect towns together with your rail network, basically, and ship various goods back and forth. Sounds tedious, I know, but it's nearly as addictive as crack. Or so I'm told.

Realms

Pirates £12.99 Kixx XL

A very engaging, if not visually stunning, swashbuckling caper. You're a Privateer Captain in the 17th century. Attack ships, navigate the high seas, slip in and out of ports, tackle multiple-choice question bars, try and marry the right "wench". A bit dated, but enjoyable nevertheless. It could do with a good sequel...

Pirates Gold £16.99 Power Plus

...But this isn't it. This is simply *Pirates* "Enhanced". The graphics have been tarted up, but there's a major flaw which makes this product inferior to the first one – a map screen, so you know where you are when sailing the seas. Half the fun of *Pirates* was having to use the sextant. When will people learn that if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Populous £14.99 Hit Squad

I think the main point here is that everyone in the entire world has played *Populous* on one format or another. And here's the cut-price PC version. If you've never played *Populous*, you might find it rather rewarding – but there's a "but". Check out the next game...

Populous II £14.99 Hit Squad

Never played *Populous*? Interested? Then why not buy *Populous II* instead – it's the same price, after all, and you get a lot more options, as well as spankier graphics and sound. You play God, and can do... well, all sorts of stuff. I can't explain. Just take my word that it's a corker.

Powermonger £14.99 Hit Squad

From Bullfrog (the *Populous* people) comes a highly enjoyable "explore lands and kill everyone" game. Quite a sophisticated program this, but it received mixed reactions when originally released. I, for one, say it's brilliant and well worth the asking price.

Sim City £14.99 Maxis

Another classic reaches budget status. Unfortunately for *Sim City*, and much as with *Populous*, I'd reckon that everyone must have already played it to death. Still, for those that haven't seen it before, all I can say is that it's tremendously addictive fare. Dated looking but fun: build a city, essentially.

Sim Earth £14.99 Maxis

Maxis, the *Sim City* people, tried to follow up the previous with a simulation of not just a city, but an entire planet. Oh dear. What you end up with is something of a mess. Overly complex and no fun whatsoever. They were trying to be clever, but they tripped over their technological shoelaces.

Sim Ant £14.99 Maxis

This received a bit of a mixed press when it came out, but in my opinion it's one of Maxis' best games. It doesn't go quite far enough, but what's there will have you up till the wee hours of the morning time and time again. Er, and you play an ant, in case you hadn't clicked. Attack spiders, etc.

A-Train £14.99 Maxis

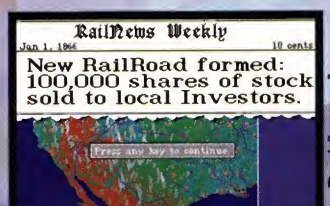
If you don't like reading hefty manuals then forget it... this is complicated. It's a bit like *Railroad Tycoon*, but with a PhD. (And it's probably fluent in 13 languages as well.) That said, it's a treat to look at - very 1994, even though it's not. A corker for train spotters of every race, creed and colour.

Sim Life £14.99 Maxis

Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. *Sim Life*? Sim 25 Mogadons more like. A snoozefest of unrivalled proportions. It looks like it's going to be really in-depth and rewarding, but after a few dazed hours all you end up with is a headache. A very bored headache, to boot.

Air Bucks

Populous 2



Railroad Tycoon

RPGs AND THE ILK

RPG ACCOLADES
The Good... Monkey Island 2
The Bad... Rorkes Drift
The Ugly... Ishar

Another World £14.99 Kbx XL

An unusual and original-ish fighty/puzzly game. It's along the lines of *Prince of Persia*, but rendered in polygons. Sounds weird and at times looks pretty weird too, as the main character minces along in ponce-o-vision. But it does work. Above average.

Prince of Persia £12.99 Hit Squad

Everyone's played *Prince of Persia*, so the chances are you're not reading this. If you are, though, and if you really haven't played it, then now's your chance. It's a classic that takes the platform game genre into a new dimension. *(What's it doing in the RPG section then? Ed.)*. You won't be disappointed.

Midwinter £12.99 Kbx XL

An interesting but ultimately repetitive first-person perspective game set amongst mountains. Too much emphasis is put on the character interaction, which is a series of quests, sub quests and so on. And yes, I know RPGs are all like that, but I don't have to agree with the rules. Er, average with some good bits.

Ashes £16.99 Kbx XL

The sequel to *Midwinter*, mega in proportions, but ultimately suffering from the same disease i.e. Yawnitis. It's that bloody "Before I say yes to your request, go and find someone else and give him this" character-interaction, sub-quest stuff again. I prefer *Midwinter* – it's more compact.

Ishar Legend of the Fortress £9.99 Daze

We're all now used to the freedom of movement in *Doom* and *Ultima Underworld*. *Ishar*, however, is one of those old *Dungeon Master*-style flick-screen jobs. Still, it's a good one. Lots of people called K'kanda and so on. You know the drill. Above average.

Ultima VI £14.99 Hit Squad

The first Ultima game that had any appeal for non-RPG converts, this game is still extremely playable despite its age. Graphically superior to all the previous Ultimas, and sporting decent sound support, this is a good introduction to the series if you haven't played any of the Ultima games.

Worlds of Legend

Ultima VII: The Black Gate £16.99 Hit Squad

Time marches on, and, of course, so do the graphics, sophistication and the like. Mixed into a massive cauldron of quest, sub quest and sub-sub quest, there's an involving story waiting to unfold. If you like this sort of thing, then this is for you. It's a biggie and no mistake.

Space Quest III £16.99 Kbx XL

A point'n'click sci-fi adventure, from Sierra. And as you may or may not know, Sierra are infamous for their crap, corny humour. Some love it, some hate it – and at the end of the day that's going to be the decider.

Space Quest IV £16.99 Kbx XL

The same goes for this one, *Space Quest IV*. Corny humour from start to finish. In the "enjoyability" stakes, I'd rate this as about the same as *Space Quest III*, but the bonus is that it's a bit harder and a bit bigger. Too many in-jokes for the uninitiated, though.

Leisure Suit Larry 1 £14.99 Kbx XL

Point'n'click Sierra time again. The humour is lewd, crude, corny and very, very American. It's about as subtle as a glassing incident in a pub. Some will love it, some will loathe it, and others may actually be titillated by it. Hard to believe but true. (Sad basts.)

Indy and the Last Crusade £15.99 Kbx XL

In the point'n'click world there are two major players: Sierra and LucasArts. We're now onto a bevvy of LucasArts stuff. This first Indiana Jones game really showed the way forward regarding the genre. It looks a tad dated graphically, but is still buyable.

Loom £14.99 Kbx XL

LucasArts cocked up with this one. They were trying to be clever – you have to recognise tunes and things, as well as do the usual pointy clicky stuff. But the whole affair is too, shall we say "fairy taley". It's sort of unbearably fey somehow. Not brill.

Monkey Island £16.99 Kbx XL

A landmark game. Really. It showed that American point'n'click humour didn't have to stoop to Sierra's level. A swashbuckling adventure, *Monkey Island* is full of novel ideas. It can make you laugh out loud. It's also pretty hard. Excellent stuff.

Another World

Rorke's Drift

Ishar Legend of the Fortress

Monkey Island II £16.99 Kbx XL

And if the prequel was excellent then this, the sequel, can only be described as superb. Better graphics, better sound and an almost movie-like structure combine with the original ideas and twists to deliver something of a must buy. Get both and play them in sequence.

Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis £9.99 Kbx XL

Warning! Warning! Warning! *Indy and the Fate of Atlantis*, the point'n'click game is the best of the lot. However... there's also *Indy and Atlantis* "The Action Game", which isn't. It's okay for what it is, but that's not saying much. Be careful out there. Study that packaging with an electron microscope.

Future Wars £12.99 Kbx XL

Blam! The French decided to get in on this point'n'click action: and their first offering (a time travelly thing) wasn't half bad. Having said that, though, it's not without faults. The problems can be on the obscure side and the point'n'click isn't "loose" enough (you often have to be pixel perfect or you're buggered).

Operation Stealth £14.99 Kbx XL

Delphine followed up *Future Wars* with this, a James Bondy affair. It suffered from the familiar ills of its predecessor (regarding the point'n'click). Oh, and there were "arcade" bits that were pitched somewhere between the ridiculous and the impossible. Not bad on the whole, though. Above average for a budget.

Worlds of Legend £14.99 Action 16

Welcome back to the lands beyond the dark waterfall, where there are goblins, orcs, and all manner of folk with names like Zorg, K'kuula and Nymphilaka. It's an isometric viewpoint and you control four RPG characters. Spells. The sword of N'Nono. And so on. Simple, old fashioned fare for simple, old fashioned folk.

Rorke's Drift £9.99 Tactix

You know *Zulu*? The Michael Caine film? Based on the true story of 137 British Soldiers versus 4000 Zulus? Imagine a strategy wargame of that scenario. Excited? Don't be... Impressions stuffed up big time. A veritable stool of a game. Unbelievably shitty for thousands of reasons.

when you insist on Quality & CHOICE...

Monkey Island 2: Le Chuck's Revenge®
CBM Amiga, IBM PC & Compatibles 3.5"

RRP £16.99

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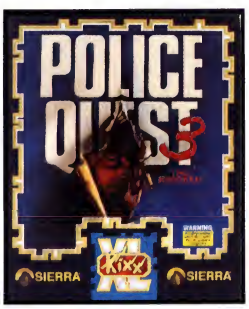

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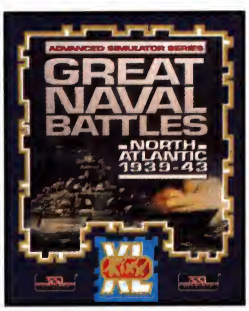

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SIMULA

Reach for the Skies £14.99
Hit Squad

There are loads of not very good WWII aerial combat simulations, and this probably heads the list. The actual combat itself is al'right, but everything else is a nightmare. No room to explain unfortunately, but just take my word for it that you won't be a satisfied bunny.

Robocop 3 £14.99 Hit Squad

Full marks for an original approach to a naff movie licence style game, but at the end of the day Robocop is a 3D polygon based abortion. Nothing too wrong with the coding, it's just the few individual 'mini-games' are so repetitive. Buy this and rue the very day.

Epic £14.99 Hit Squad

From DID (the *Robocop 3* people) comes an unbelievably useless and annoying space combat sim. The polygon graphics are okay (although they're a bit "pop up out of nowhere-ish"), but the real bugbear is the mission timer. You have to continuously beat the clock. Avoid at all costs.

Stunt Car Racer £7.99 Kixx XL

The Amiga version of this stunt car game was excellent, and if the PC version followed suit I'd call it an essential purchase. Unfortunately it isn't, because it's graphically diabolical... EGA, but not even good EGA. Crap EGA is not nice. And how about the CGA mode? Yeah, forget it.

Test Drive III £12.99 Hit Squad

A pretty crap driving game that has its moments. It's better than the more recent *Car and Driver*, but that's not saying a lot. If the driving model had any bearing on reality then *Test Drive III* might be enjoyable. But it doesn't. So it isn't.

Stunt Car Racer

Indianapolis 500 £14.99
Hit Squad

A few years ago this game had everyone saying "wow". The first-ever realistic driving model coupled with the ability to race the wrong way round the track, cause pile-ups, and then watch the action replays. But these days? A bit dated and limited.

MicroProse Grand Prix £16.99
Power Plus

This is the business. 16 Grand Prix tracks, brilliant graphics, great driving model, blah blah blah. It's all there, basically – and in many respects it's actually a better game than *Indycar Racing* (the full price one).

Jimmy White's Snooker £14.99
Hit Squad

Beautifully programmed and brilliantly implemented, this is the definitive snooker simulation. It takes a wee while to get the hang of the pseudo 3D, but when you do you'll be laughing like a sandboy.

Silent Service II £14.99
Action 16

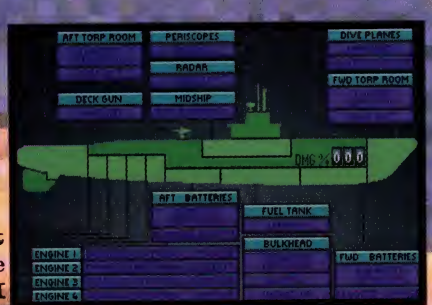
A WWII submarine sim which approached the subject matter in the correct fashion, had a good interface and created the right atmosphere. However, the surface graphics spoiled the show... enemy ships are bitmaps. They jerk about like Katherine Hepburn on bad Ecstasy.

688 Attack Sub £14.99
Hit Squad

A hi-tech version of *Silent Service II* (i.e. it's modern sub warfare) with the most appalling user interface ever. Like *Silent Service II*, the atmosphere is great... if you can forget about the shitehouse "bitmaps".

M1 Tank Platoon £14.99 Kixx XL

If you've ever assumed tank sims were simple blasty shoot-shoot funfests, then forget it now. We're talking 90 per cent strategy with excessive use of an overhead map for advanced planning. And the graphics are very dated. Nevertheless, if you're a sad bastard you could find an interesting challenge here.



Silent Service II

LHX Attack Chopper

Wing Commander £14.99
Hit Squad

There are those who think *Wing Commander* is God. And others that think it stinks. I'm with the stinkers. The first ever so-called "interactive movie" (Bleeeuk!) balances space combat with all manner of horribly unconvincing spaceship bitmaps against the corniest "script" in the world.

Shuttle £14.99 Hit Squad

Anoraks rally round! A fully working Space Shuttle dashboard, consisting of 15 squillion dials and switches. Learn how to take off. Learn how to position a satellite in orbit. Learn how to glide back to Earth.

Their Finest Hour £16.99 Kixx XL

The Battle of Britain, rendered in a mixture of polygon graphics (the ground stuff) and bitmaps (for the planes). It works rather well, actually, and had staff at Dennis Publishing hooked for months. But that was four years ago. It's somewhat dated now, but still has its moments I suppose.

Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe £16.99 Kixx XL

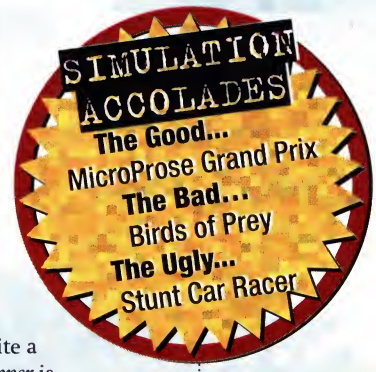
The sequel to *Their Finest Hour*, but this time it's later in the war and there are all sorts of new, experimental, aircraft to fly. The same applies as for *Their Finest Hour*. The team responsible went on to do *X-Wing* and *Tie Fighter*.

F117A Stealth Fighter £16.99
Power Plus

A pretty good game this, with lovely (if slightly dated) graphics. Missions abungo in your corky little stealth bomber see you flying low and fast in an attempt to outfox the enemy radar stations. There's some air-to-air stuff too. Not a bad purchase by any standards.

Indiapolis 500

TIONS



F-19 Stealth Fighter £16.99
Kixx XL

Ditto virtually everything said about *F117A Stealth Fighter*, only this – the prequel – isn't half as good. If you want a good budget *Stealth Fighter* game, get *F117A*

LHX Attack Chopper £14.99
Hit Squad

Four helicopters to choose from and about 705 trillion missions to use them in. Lot's of external views to play with as well. Unfortunately, these tend to show how dated *LHX* has become on the graphics front. Great in its day, not so now.

Heroes Of The 357th £14.99
Hit Squad

What do you get if you cross a flight sim with an arcade game? The answer is... THIS. Not so much in the way of missions, but more like different "levels". You get points. Fast, smooth, polygon graphics abound, but there's virtually no ground detail.

F-15 Strike Eagle II £16.99
Kixx XL

Think *F-19* (the not so good *Stealth Fighter* game) and replace the ground-based missions and radar avoidance with pretty much unadulterated air-to-air stuff. 14 zillion missions but it's still mediocre.

F-15 Strike Eagle III £16.99
Power Plus

The much more realistic younger brother (i.e. it's the sequel) to *F-15 II*. Heaps of guru shading and texture-mapping stuff slow things down on weaker PCs. It got pretty high ratings on release, but I reckon it's a bit useless. Be wary, is my message.

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat
£14.99 Hit Squad

It may be old, the polygon graphics may be a bit "simple", but there's a certain *je n'est sais quoi* involved here. It's been on my hard drive for yonks and it's still the biz, even five years on.

688 Attack Sub

Gunship 2000
£16.99 Power Plus

A helicopter sim, and quite a good one. *LHX Attack Chopper* is not worth getting, *Gunship 2000* – if you really, really want a helicopter sim – is. Beware that it needs a fair wodge of processing power, though.

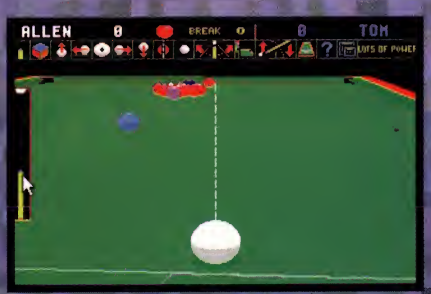
Dogfight £16.99 Power Plus

A sort of modern (1993) attempt to redo *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*, only this time even better. A nice thought. The reality, however, is another thing altogether, because *Dogfight* sucks. There's no room to explain what went wrong, but believe me, the list is longer than a blue whale's penis.

Birds of Prey £14.99 Hit Squad

How does the chance to fly 40 aircraft sound to you? Good eh? What about if I add the fact that the graphics are so appalling you won't actually want to go up in any of them? Aha. Now we're getting somewhere. This is a very crap game indeed. Uniquely unenjoyable.

Shuttle



Jimmy White's Snooker

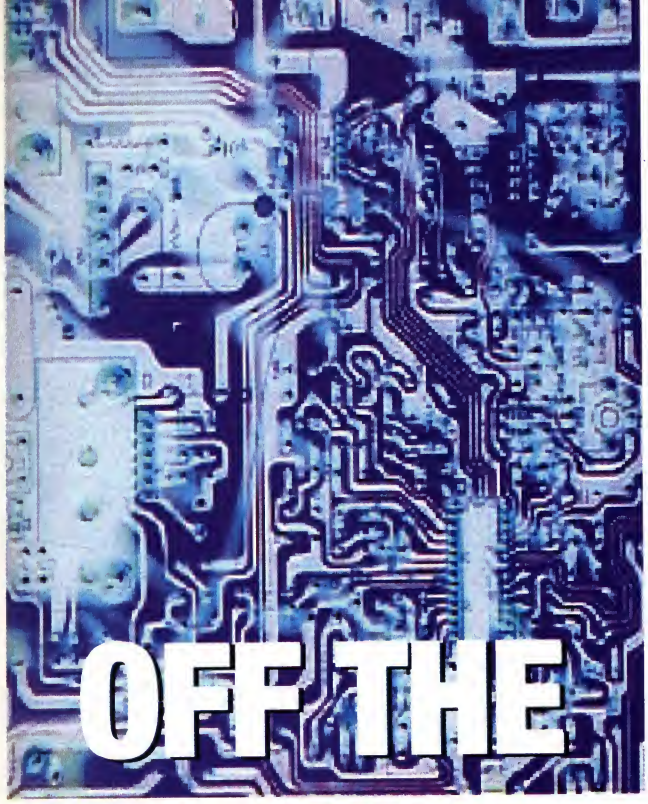
Coming Soon

If you think the excellent selection on offer in this feature sounds too good to be true, just wait until the beginning of 1995 when Hit Squad will be releasing *Dune 2*, one of the all-time strategy classics, *Ultima Underworld*, arguably the best first-person perspective ever made, and *Legend of Kyrandia*, the best-selling adventure game – and all at £14.99. With games of this quality coming out on budget, you have to wonder if it's worth spending forty quid and up on the latest games, or whether you should just keep track of the latest budget releases which offer similar quality at a fraction of the price.

So there you have it. Not a list of every budget game in the world, but a healthy chunk. There's one I left out, because it didn't fit any of the genres... but I've got to mention it here because of the pathetic "selling point". It's the budget *Tetris*, and it comes in the biggest box known to mankind. "Buy me," its size proclaims. "Why should I?" you think... And here's what the box says: "So simple and yet so absorbing! Imagine blocks of simple shapes moving down your screen." Then they hit you with the hook, which is as follows: "If you enjoy *TETRIS*, you will be fascinated by SEVEN COLORS". Blimey! Where's the check-out counter?

Contact Numbers

Hit Squad	061 832 6633
Kixx XL	021 625 3311
Power Plus and Action 16	0276 684959
Impressions (Tactix)	071 351 2133
Daze	071 372 7435



OFF THE BOARDS

Shooting balloons, shooting drugs. Who said shareware was boring? Mark Burgess blows up Trinity College, aces Elvis and looks at the next release from iD.

SIM PIZZA

THIS isn't the latest wheeze from Maxis. If you have a really low spec machine and cannot run *Indycar*, this could be the game for you. Actually, I jest. This is a fairly pathetic game in which you deliver pizzas. The town streets and your trusty moped are both in top-down 2D. It is a bit like the famous Lawnmower sim for the Speccy. As with a real driving game, it's hell to play on the keyboard, but unlike most there is no other choice.

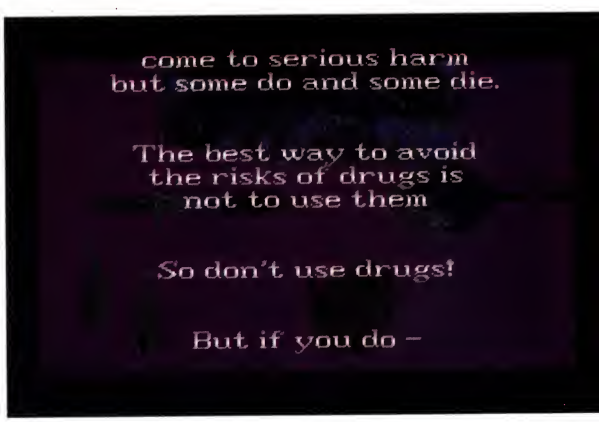
Although there is an unlimited supply of pizzas at Tony's (that's where you work) your moped can only hold five pizza's, and from time to time you will have to re-supply yourself. (With a sound card, you can hear your grumpy boss, but I wouldn't bother buying one just for this game.)

Your performance depends on how fast you deliver the pizzas with points are deducted for injuries, hitting pedestrians and losing orders by taking too long. Your eyes probably lit up at the bit about pedestrians, didn't they? Yes, you can run them over and they die. You can also drive your moped into oncoming cars and kill yourself. (None of the cars stop, by the way; not even police cars.)

Sim Pizza is a bit of fun so long as you're not expecting anything more complicated than *PacMan*, that is.

Shareware from: Andromeda Industries
Registration: $20.00
Needs: 386, VGA
Supports: SoundBlaster and compatible sound cards

WRECKED



WRECKED had the kind of advanced publicity that *Doom* would envy. Attacked by the tabloids, attacked by MPs; it has to have something going for it.

It's a platform game with a twist and it's written by Healthwise, a Liverpudlian health information service. The twist is that, instead of power ups and spells, you take drugs. Just like life. But this is an educational program – it lives in CompuServe's Edutainment forum – so the drugs hamper your ability to jump from one platform to another. Take heroin and you go all fuzzy and fall over a lot. Take "magic mushrooms" and the whole screen goes strange and you throw up.

Lady Olga Maitland described it as an "outrage", and I have to say it's true – the control system is a bit wobbly and that the game runs too fast on a DX2.

The aim is simple – jump form platform to platform and avoid hazards such as pits of fire. When you come across "a certain substance", as the police would call it, then you choose between "info", "stash" and "take". "Info" gives a kind of cigarette card guide to the drug and it's effects. "Stash" means you keep it for later; when you can find that *Tangerine Dream* album. "Take" means – well, have a guess. The sprite really does shoot up in glorious VGA. Sound (if you have a SoundBlaster or compatible) is by a Liverpool band called *Timeshard*.

Wrecked! is a brave attempt to teach the pitfalls of drugs. Their nasty and unpredictable side effects are all here, together with the cost in money and time in nick. But there is a mistake at the heart of the game. Okay, we now know you shouldn't jump from platform to platform after taking smack or acid. But who tries that anyway? You take drugs, you listen to music and contemplate your navel – or bore your friends rigid if you're on speed. You don't start jumping over fiery pits. Not unless it's really dodgy gear. I have a strong feeling that this program won't make anyone turn down that tab which could be "E" or vetenary tranquilliser. Everyone I know who used to take drugs stopped because they grew out of it.

Still, it's shareware so it won't cost you. Go on, try a bit. It won't hurt. Registration brings you all five levels and if you can get through to level five within a week of Healthwise sending you the full version, you will get your money back.

Shareware from: Healthwise at 9 Slater Street, Liverpool L1 4BW.
Registration: £25
Needs: 386 or higher processor, VGA display and about 583K base memory

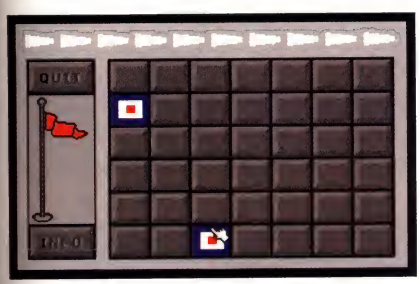
FIND THE FLAG

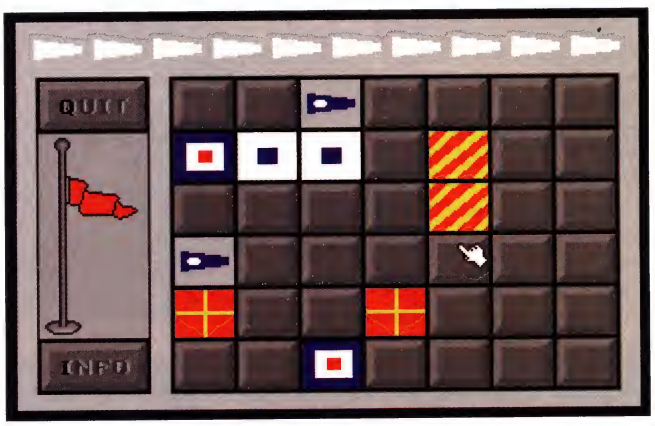
FIND THE FLAG is one of those memory test games – like the amazing *Auto Concentration* (issue 10). You click on tiles, they turn over and you try and remember their place. The aim is to get matching pairs.

This is a good version, and it's freeware so it doesn't cost anything. Lord Lakin "he fills the stage with flags" will be disappointed to hear that they aren't the real thing. There isn't a Union Flag or the whatever they fly in Russia these days. This makes it a bit harder. Pelmanism games like this work better if the tiles are of things that make some kind of sense – like road signs.

This will pass a few minutes, but it's unlikely to keep you up half the night.

Freeware from: Dataware
Registration: n/a
Needs: 286 and EGA





SKUNNY KART

THIS is another racing game from those wacky people who bought you the amazing *Skunny Hardnut* series. So you know what to expect – erratic but occasionally brilliant programming with gameplay getting lost along the way. In fact, this is the best thing that Copysoft have done for ages.

Skunny Kart is a cross between a racing and a platform game. You hare around a variety of tracks in a go-cart, but at the same time you are picking up various bonuses. This has some bizarre effects – you can be languishing in the race itself but if you can pick up enough clock bonuses you can still win. The things on the track are evenly divided between the good and the bad. Good stuff includes the clock bonuses that knock five seconds off your time, turbo chargers, coins that add 5,000 to your score and missiles that you can use to shoot other drivers. Bad stuff includes ghosts, devils and teddy bears... Don't ask. You also have to contend with natural hazards such as oil slicks and ice patches. The missiles are used in the Battle Mode. Each car has three balloons. When they have burst, the car stops.

In *Skunny Kart* you race against a friend (if you have one) or the computer (if you don't have one of those, you can't play at all).

This is well programmed and certainly as good as many console games. Sound is excellent (especially in Battle Mode when the computer shouts out "incoming!"). The game really needs a joystick or, better, a gamepad.

Shareware from: Copysoft
Registration: $33.95 (£24.95 from Transend, 0274 622 228)
Needs: 386 or better, 4MB, VGA
Supports: SoundBlaster, AdLib and compatible sound cards, joystick and Gravis Gamepad

There are good and bad things to be found on the track. The good includes turbo chargers and the bad includes... Teddy bears?!

WHAT IS PUBLIC DOMAIN AND SHAREWARE?

PUBLIC DOMAIN

This is software that's free. You can copy and distribute it as you like. The only conditions are that you do not pass the work off as your own, do not incorporate it in another program without due credit and, of course, that you do not charge money for something you have got for nothing.

SHAREWARE

This is software that asks for a registration fee, either after a specific time or "if found useful". The fee varies enormously and you are morally obliged to pay it or stop using the program although it is true that many programs ask you to send $5 to an address in Wichita. A leading shareware author recently estimated that about 90% of users don't register. Registration brings the latest version of the program, a place on the mailing list for updates and, often, a properly printed manual. Not to mention a warm glow of moral satisfaction.

OTHERS

Bannerware/Adware: These are programs where the author does not ask for any payment but reserves copyright. This means that you have a free license to use and copy the game.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Many commercial software houses will release a playable demo of their latest games so that you have some idea of what you're expected to pay £50 for. Not often found in libraries, they tend to live on the cover of magazines or on bulletin boards.

WHAT DO YOU GET?

The disk should contain a file called READ.ME or README.1ST. Read it by typing TYPE README.1ST | MORE. There will also be some sort of batch (.BAT) file in the disk. Typing in the name of it should load the program.

Most programs will come in archived form. This is because the library is trying to fit as much information as possible on a 760k disk. The files will have extensions such as .ARC, .ARJ, .LHA, .PAK, or .ZIP. However, the disk will come with a program that will decompress the files, together with instructions on how to use it.

ELVIS LIVES

WHILE the jury is still out on *Doom II* (but the signs aren't good), the original *Doom* goes from strength to strength. Is there an office in the country that has a network and yet lacks *Doom*? I think not. And the game is growing; every week new and better WAD files are uploading onto CompuServe and CIX.

My favourite at the moment is *Elvis in Graceland*. This is set in Memphis 2011 where a sinister scientist has re-animated the corpse of the King. The humans are replaced by Elvis and other monsters stay the same. Health bonuses are bottles of beer, armour mike stands and stimpacks take-away food bags. Visually it's great, but it might not be challenging enough for some players.

Once the file is unzipped in your *Doom* directory, type: ADDELVIS to alter the sprites and DOOM -FILES ELVIS11.WAD to play. Remove it with NOELVIS. Of course, the -files' switch only works with registered *Doom*. Nice bit of work from Robert "Aaron" Bukoski.

Another excellent WAD file is *The Unholy Trinity* (trinity.WAD). Here, the playing arena is Trinity College Cambridge. The buildings are beautifully done, as are the interiors. There is a bit of a shock when you travel from a panelled library to some pit of radioactive slime, but maybe Cambridge is like that. This file is worth getting just to see what can be done with *Doom*. Plus the opportunity of shooting up a Porters' Lodge, of course. All credit to Steve McCrea, Simon Wall, and Elias Papavassilopoulos.

And here's a *Doom* add-on for the girls: *FemDoom* puts a female face on the status bar so you no longer have to look at a *man*.

Freeware: From Lynn Forest

This month's programs

CompuServe

Forum	Section	Program	filename	size
CIX	Doom Files	Trintity	Trinity.zip	313299
GAMERS	Action Game Aids	Elvis in Graceland	dmelvi.zip	558651
GAMERS	Action Game Aids	FemDoom	dmfem.zip	9223
GAMERS	Action Games	Heretic slide show	htscrn.zip	360940
GAMERS	Action Games	Sim Pizza	pizza.zip	287410
GAMERS	Action Games	Skunny Kart	skart.zip	1235456
GAMERS	Edutainment	Find the Flag	fflag.exe	29195
GAMERS	Edutainment	Wrecked!	wrecke.zip	3511375

COMING SOON HERETIC

ID, shareware maestros and Raven Software, they of the nifty graphics, have got together for *Heretic*. It's described as "a supernatural blast-feast" with "everything you loved in *Doom* and more". This sounds a pretty tall order.

Heretic is a sort of sword and sorcery shoot 'em up, with you saving the world from an old evil.

The graphics are absolutely stunning. You can look up and down, fly through the sky, struggle against winds and currents, navigate volcanic pits and ice-covered passages and zap things.

Heretic will support up to four players via network, or two by modem. ID reckon it will be "the most realistic and visually dramatic 3D environment yet designed".

Expect the first shareware level to appear sometime in December. With luck, that means December 1994. Registration brings the second and third episodes. A slide show has already been uploaded to CompuServe (Gamers: Action) as **htscrn.zip**.

ZONE ware

Are you a few parts short of a complete solution? Or still desperate for that *Space Hulk* cover disk? Then be still your beating heart because on these pages you can order all the back issues you desire. And if the cashpoint machine is salivating at the sight of your card, why not pay less for your fun by taking a dabble in the world of shareware. Nine out of ten bank managers recommend it.

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AW04A	☐ PC Zone 4	AW11A	☐ PC Zone 11	AW18A	☐ PC Zone 18
AW05A	☐ PC Zone 5	AW12A	☐ PC Zone 12	AW19A	☐ PC Zone 19
AW06A	☐ PC Zone 6	AW13A	☐ PC Zone 13	AW20A	☐ PC Zone 20
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TROUBLESHOOT

FEATURING THE HACKMASTERS™ AND THE TRUEPLAYERS™

In the intensely metaphysical world of gamesplaying, two barely subtle symbols have come to typify the opposing psyches of the "universal gaming conscious". One – an armoured fist crushing a spiral-bound notepad – is the banner for the HackMasters™, aggressive, ruthless hackers committed to cheating, poking, and all manner of foul debuggery. The other – a stripy tracksuit, topped by a golden halo – is the symbol for the TruePlayers™, upright stanchions of non-cheating ways.

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The HackMasters™

ANOTHER MONTH. Another fun-packed HackMasters™ section. This month, caught up as we are in a serious hack drought, we have had to resort to linking our hacks with this issue's budget feature. Read, go on read, the wacky budget feature on page 132 and then, when you've made your purchasing choice and parted with the moolah, turn to these pages and hack the games before you even play it. Cool.

BACK UP

Most, if not all, of the hacks on this page will require changing actual game files (mainly SAVEGAME files, peppered with the odd main .EXE file). It is then sensible to back up the file specified in the hack. To do this, simply enter the directory containing the file, say for example SAVEGAME.SAV, and back it up thus:

```
COPY SAVEGAME.SAV SAVEGAME.BAK
```

If you make a bad mistake and start crying and all, then restore files by typing:

```
COPY SAVEGAME.BAK SAVEGAME.SAV
```

HEXADECIMAL

Your PC counts strangely. In hexadecimal (base 16). We count in decimal (base 10). For the HackMaster's experience you only really need to learn a few choice hex numbers (see table below).

WHAT YOU NEED

There are three things every HackMaster™ groupie must have (well, at least one of them).

❶. DEBUG Free with DOS is a program called *debug*. A very useful program it is too, since it allows you to edit files of all descriptions and subtly change the data therein. It is the program we use most in the Hackmaster Zone™, and since it is the most user-unfriendly program *on this planet*, a brief introduction/explanation is necessary. Here's a step-by-step guide to a *Debug* hack:

HEX	DECIMAL
09H	09
0AH	10
0FH	15
10H	16
20H	32
28H	40
32H	50
40H	64
63H	99
64H	100
C8H	200
FAH	250
FFH	255

To run it just type DEBUG in the appropriate directory (i.e. the one mentioned in the hack blurb). It should run automatically and produce a little '>' prompt. If you get a "file not found" style error then your DOS path hasn't been set properly. Refer to the MS-DOS manual and remember the bottom line – don't ring us (no matter how desperate) unless it's TruePlayer™ Tips day.

```
1  >PRO.SVE <return>
```

Now, once you have a little '>' prompt you should type in the commands listed in the program, starting with the line above the "N" command. This tells *debug* which program is to be hacked. There should be no space between the "N" and the full filename.

```
2 >L <return>
```

This command loads the file you've just specified into memory and into the hands of the hacker.

```
3 >E 0103 v <return>
```

This is the Edit function. Simply type is as it appears above, i.e. with a space between the "E" and the address (0103) and the "V". The "V" stands for a value you will enter yourself, ranging between 00 and FF (0 to 255 decimal).

```
4 >E 0308 01 01 01 01
```

If the edit command looks something like this (i.e. a long list of numbers), then press RETURN after the address (the first four-digit code) and *debug* will repeat your command (see below). Then simply type in the values which follow (01, 01 etc.) pressing SPACE between each one, except the last when you should press RETURN. So basically, the command should be enacted thus (with what you must type shown in green):

```
>E 0308<Return>
21FB:A97F 01.01 <space> 00.01 <space> 00.01
<space> 00.01 <return>
>
5 >W <return>
```

This command writes the hacked file back onto the disk. A message saying "writing xxxxx bytes" will appear, where xxxxx is the size of the file (it varies). Nothing will have been changed on your hard disk until you type this command. Therefore, if you've made a mistake earlier just quit *debug* and start the process again.

```
6 >Q <return>
```

This quits you back to DOS.

❷ A DISK SECTOR EDITOR

Another useful bit of kit is a Disk Sector Editor, such as *XTree Gold* or *PC Tools*. If you own one, then you'll know how to use it – but it is important to note that the offset (or address) in a debug hack is for *debug* which automatically adds 256 bytes (or 100 hex) to the address. So, if you prefer to use your editor, and a separate disk editor hack isn't included, then you just deduct 100 hex from the address. So, if an address is 0141 on the page, then your address will be 0041. It's a simple case of deducting one from the second figure on the left. If in doubt, use *debug*.

RAILROAD TYCOON
(MicroProse/Action 16)

When paying strategy games along the lines of *Tycoon* you often need the encouragement of a straightforward hack. To wit: a hack for *Railroad Tycoon*.

Simply save your game in the top slot, exit the game, back up the file RRO.SVE and then *debug*:

```
NRRO.SVE
L
E 3848 88 13  Five million
dollars
W
Q
```

SIM CITY
(Maxis)

Just type FUNDS during the game to earn yourself substantial moolah. Be warned however: this cheat may results in unexpected earthquakes.

PRINCE OF PERSIA
(Domark/Kixx)

When running your new budget version, start the game by typing:

```
PRINCE MEGAHIT
```

Now, in game, use the following keys:

```
K              Kill enemies
SHIFT+K        Lose a health
               bottle
SHIFT+T        Gain a health
               bottle
SHIFT+W        Float down gaps
SHIFT+I        Invert screen
+ and -        Increase/decrease
               time limit
```

ISHAR
(Silmarils/Daze)

Save your game in slot 1, quit out, back up the file GAME01.SAV, and then *debug*:

```
NGAME01.SAV
E 02D5 FF     255 vitality
E 02DF FF     Lots of money
E 02E9 FF     255 psychic
E 03E2 7F     Level 128
E 03E7 7F     Max strength
E 03EC 7F     Max wisdom
E 03F1 7F     Max constitution
E 03F6 33     Max agility
E 03FB 33     Max intelligence
E 03FF 1F     Max skills
E 0400 77     Max physical
E 0405 77     Max mental
W
Q
```

ULTIMA VI
(Origin/EA)

This is a weird one, this is. In game, talk to Iolo and say "spam, spam, spam, humbug". No, really.

ULTIMA VII
(Origin/EA)

To activate the *Black Gate* cheat, type the following when running the game:

```
ULTIMA7 ABCDv
```

where "v" is the control code for ASCII character 255. To enter the code, hold down ALT and type 255 on the numeric keypad. Release ALT and press return. The game will run as per normal but now the following keys have some esoteric effects:

```
F2     Cheat system
Shows the cheat mode menu
F3     Teleport
Point and click on the map to
reach that location
F5     Cast Spell
Enter the spell number and press
RETURN
F8     Read
Type number of sign, book, or
whatever and press RETURN
ALT-1  Sound FX test
Type a number and press RETURN
ALT-2  Sprite test
Type a number and press RETURN
```

F19 STEALTH FIGHTER
(Kixx)

Back up the file ROSTER.FIL, then *debug*:

```
NROSTER.FIL
L
E 0100 00
E 0150 00
E 01A0 00
E 01F0 00
E 0240 00
E 0290 00
E 02E0 00
E 0330 00
E 0380 00
E 03D0 00
W
Q
```

LHX ATTACK CHOPPER
(Hit Squad)

A wee in-built cheat for this aged but fun chopper sim. In game, press CTRL-R to recharge all weapons and CTRL-U to change the shape of your 'copter (use the outside views to see the effect).

EPIC
(US Gold)

If you've actually bought this turkey of a game, then you'll need these level codes: AURIGA, CEPHEUS, MUSCA, PYXIS, CETUS, FORMAX, CAELUM, and CORVUS.

SPACE QUEST IV
(Kixx XL)

We're not sure if this works, but try it anyway. Use the following keys in game to experience the following effects:

```
ALT-I  Show all objects and get
       any objects
ALT-M  20 bucks on your pay roll
ALT-R  Current room number
ALT-T  Teleport
```

WING COMMANDER I & II
(Electronic Arts)

Here is the legendary *Wing Commander* cheat. If you're playing the first game, run the game with:

```
WC Origin -k
```

with a capital "O" and a lower case "k". If you're playing *Wing Commander 2*, run the game with:

```
WC2 Origin -k
```

Now, when you enter the game, you'll have infinite shields and ammo, while pressing ALT and DEL simultaneously will destroy the currently selected target (including wingmen).

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you get into trouble then ring us on TruePlayer Tips day (Wednesday 2pm to 6pm).

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The TruePlayers™

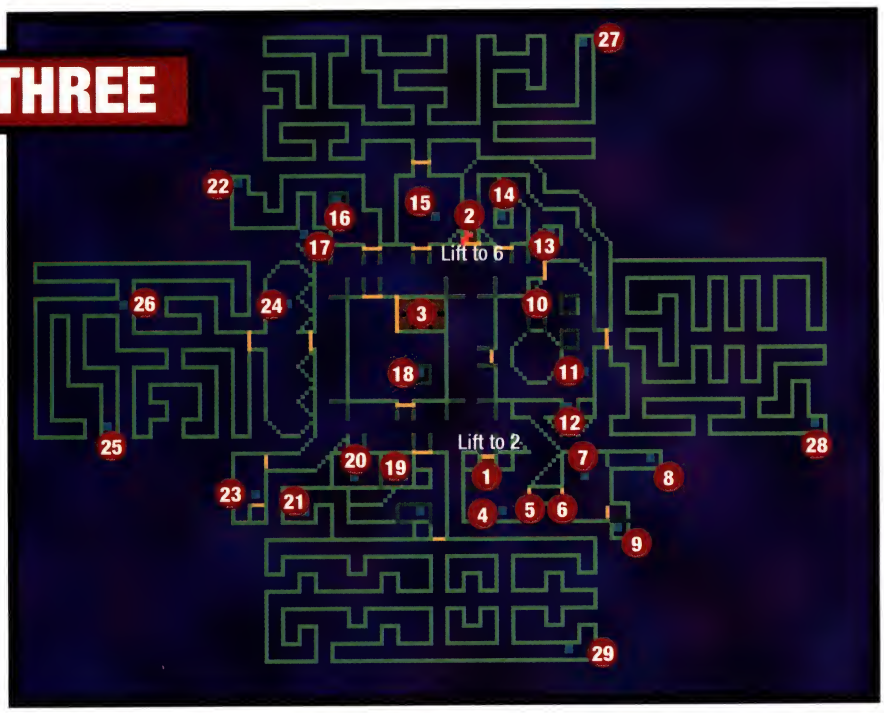
SPOILED!

Part Two

System Shock

And so the TruePlayer Labs continue their authoritative delve-cum-penetration into the sci-fi sewer system that is *System Shock*. Last month, we ushered you through the first three levels of the game and guided you like a father to the end of the first phase – destroying the laser. Read on then, for the next thrilling installment.

LEVEL THREE



LEVEL THREE (Maintenance)

1 Lift to two
2 Lift to six
3 Cargo lift to four
4 CPU ROOM, four servobots, two detox
5 Blocked by SHODAN security.
6 Retinal scan lock
7 E-Suit v.2, two Teflon
8 Two EMP, two conc
9 Two medi, two nitro, two conc, first aid, MagPulse
10 POWERSTATION
11 LOG
12 Four interface demodulators, four 2100, four EMPs, four Logic
13 Sensaround v.2
14 AM Hornet
15 LOG (Harvey)
16 RELAY ANALYSER
17 POWERSTATION (faulty)
18 two conc
19 Five Batts
20 Four Hornet
21 Laser Rapier, SEC-1 Robot
22 Magnum 2100
23 REGENERATION BAY
24 LOG (Ghiran). Decapitated head.
25 RELAY 428
26 RailGun
27 Mark three Assault Rifle
28 AM Flechette
29 Two MagPulse

OKAY, SO WE'VE COMBED through the minutiae of the medical (level one), research (level two), and reactor (level R) levels, accumulated some entry level hardware, enabled the shields, and destroyed the space station's laser. Unfortunately, Shodan's next plan is to dump his mutation virus on Earth's fair face. He's been developing the virus in one of the station's groves (simulated Earth "gardens"), way up on level six. We have to stop him somehow. But first we have to get through levels three, four and five. Ouch.

LEVEL THREE

Take the elevator on level two or R to level three. Ready your weapons. This level is tough. It's packed with "invisible" flying mutants. They're not completely invisible; more translucent, but they fire deadly purple fireballs and are very difficult to kill. Your best bet is put your lantern on, dip your view to look at the ground, and ready an automatic weapon such as the AM Flechette (found on level R last month). When you see one, fire off a burst to get its attention and then back off steadily, pummelling it with lead. If it's far away, lob a frag grenade to weaken it, but be careful – level three has a low ceiling and narrow corridors; you could easily end up dismembering yourself.

Another thing before we continue: these invisible (inviso) mutants tend to keep reappearing when you die, or leave the level and come back. Don't even consider a room "clean" if you've died and been regenerated since you cleaned it.

Considering the dangerous nature of this level, your first stop should be the regeneration bay to the west at 23. Run straight here, ignoring any mutants en route if you can. The switch to unlock the door is on the left. Get in there quick and deactivate the Cyborg regeneration.

BASICS

The basic layout of the level is the same as the others. A central area (containing a cargo lift to levels four and five) is surrounded by a square corridor which leads, at four points of the compass, to the maintenance areas. You cannot get through these as yet. You will have to come back later to

explore them, so don't be put off by the map. Basically, you just need to explore the parts of the level that you can reach, destroying cameras and collecting goodies.

Your next stop should be the CPU room at four. Watch out – there is a queue of servobots waiting to have a go at you. This area is a place of relative safety as the inviso mutants can't fit around the corner. The maintenance office door is blocked by Shodan security which, as ever, you will have to return to later.

Make your next port of call, the large dark and scary room at ten. It has a regular guard of three inviso mutants tucked behind the crate, but the energy station here is worth the risk. Head up the gravity lift at 12 for some goodies and some Interface Demodulators (take one and leave the rest – you'll need it later).

THE HEAD

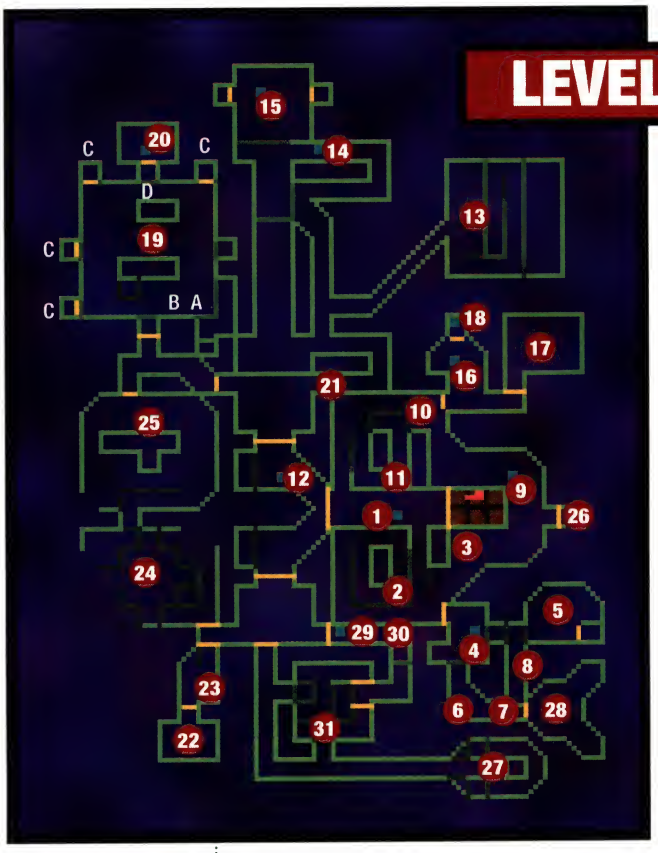
Exit that room and pop carefully round to room 13 to collect the new, faster Sensaround v.2 which will give you a useful rear-view mirror. Nip into 14, grab the Hornet ammo, and climb the ladder to find a short cut passage back to the energy station room. Room 16 contains the Relay Analyser (useful for later – don't waste your time with it now), and a Magnum 2100 – if you don't already have one – at the end of the crawlway. The Energy Station at room 17 is faulty and will chop a whopping 40 per cent off your health if you use it. Room 24 contains the gruesome remains of Abe Ghiran, including his severed head. TAKE THE HEAD. No, really. You will need it later. Do not lose it.

If you have explored all the rooms that you can, then you can safely leave the level for now. However, before you go, climb the ladders at 19 and 21 to find some batteries and a Laser Rapier respectively. Ignore the rapier – it's completely useless. Head into the central room and kill the mutants therein. A switch – found low on the western wall behind some crates – will raise the block at 18 to reveal two concussion grenades. Enter the cargo lift and thumb the button for level four.

LEVEL THREE EQUIPMENT

WEAPONS	UPGRADES
AM Hornet	Sensaround v.2
Laser Rapier	E-Suit v.2
Magnum 2100	
RailGun	
Mark three Assault Rifle	

LEVEL FOUR



Level four is the storage level and, therefore, is cleanly segregated into seven or eight storage room-lets, accessed from the main junction at 12. The level is heavily populated with SEC-1 robots and Cyborg warriors, so get your magnum ready if you want to survive. Give the storage areas a wide berth to begin with and head instead for the descending corkscrew formation at two. Tread carefully – a few nasty robots are buried around the last corner. To be safe, chuck a few conc grenades down there and then reap the goodies. Now make your way immediately to four and then onto the restoration bay at five. Check out the secret passage at eight (lots of goodies) and clear the passage, at six, of mutants. Note the keypad locked door at seven. You'll come back here later.

Now explore the northern side. Read Aubrey's log at three for a clue as to what lurks behind one of the storage room doors (an essential Environment Protection Suit). Ignore the radiation door at 26 (we could open it in the beta version of *System Shock*, but it wouldn't budge in the full version). By all means pick up the riot gun at ten, but – frankly – it's useless. There's much better hardware on offer later. Go to room 16 and the energy station therein, and stop off at 17 to destroy the CPU nodes (do not forget to note down the number on the monitor). MacLeod and Wang's logs make interesting reading. Apparently MacLeod stashed some plastique somewhere on this level. Hmmm....

STORAGE ROOMS

Now you're ready to backtrack to the start room and to head west to the storage room. Watch your step around here. Almost every door has a couple of SEC-1 robots waiting behind it. Go into room 12, destroy the cameras, and head directly north. Take the eastern passage, through 21, and head up firstly to room 13. Again, be cautious. Three Cyborg warriors are waiting within and they throw frag grenades at you. There are a few goodies here, but the best stuff's at 15. To get to 15 you have to turbo boost over the slide. If you miss, you fall onto three primed landmines and die. It is prudent, therefore, to nip around to 14 first and destroy the landmines with a well-aimed sparq shot from afar. If you do land at 15, you'll probably be assassinated by the two SEC-1 robots which lurk behind the doors to ☞

LEVEL FOUR (STORAGE)

1 Three medi
2 Cyborg warrior
3 LOG (Aubrey)
4 Cyborg warrior
5 Restoration Bay
6 Gor-Tiger Mutant, frag
7 Keypad unlocks door
8 Hidden door: three I-CAD batts, two nitro
9 Cyborg warrior, two Hollow 2100
10 Two DC Slugs, Riot Gun
11 Teflon, Turbo-motion booster v.2
12 Four cameras
13 Three RepairBots, three Cyborg warriors, two medi, four frag
14 Landmines
15 Two SEC-1 robots, two batts, Target Identifier v.2
16 LOG (MacLeod). LOG (Wang)
17 CPU ROOM. Batt.
18 ENERGY STATION
19 Two MagPulse, seven RepairBots, one Gor Tiger.
a) Ledge
b) Gravity lift
c) Cyborg warrior
d) Switch
20 Three AM Hornet, two 2100, three MagPulse, two Medi, one reflex, one detox, ten plastique
21 Two SEC-1 robots
22 AM-27 Flechette, LOG (Sabo)
23 Doors blocked by SHODAN security.
24 RADIATION AREA. Three SEC-1 robots, crate (two detox)
25 Two SEC-1 robots, two Hollow 2100, Target Identifier v.2, two 5V Tranq, LOG (MacLeod)
26 Radiation door.
27 Zero G-Mutants, crate (EMP)
28 LOG (MacLeod). E-SUIT v.1. Magnum 2100.
29 Two MagPulse, one I-CADD.
30 Nitro, Jump Jets v.1, genius, RF Slag
31 Annoying room

SPOILED!

LEVEL FOUR EQUIPMENT

WEAPONS	UPGRADES
Riot Gun	Turbo-motion v.2
AM-27 Flechette	Target Identifier v.2
Magnum 2100	E-Suit v.1
	Jump Jets v.1

☞ the east and west. The best approach is to inch your way up to the lip of the ramp and then throw some landmines right in front of the doors. Then, when you boost over, the robots are destroyed before they can even step out of their cubby-holes and get a bead on you. Once you've performed this athletic task, scurry back to 12 and explore the regions to the south. Go to room 24 first. Again, this location requires a degree of athleticism. A switch in the south-east corner activates the gravity lift in the centre, which, annoyingly enough, cycles through red and green. Time your jump well and it should carry you aloft, allowing you to side-step delicately onto the force bridge. An essential log lies beyond in room 25. Once you've dispatched the robots, dig it out. The log tells you that the first digit for the door at seven is an "8".

PAINFUL ACTIVITIES

Now the time is ripe for room 19 – as good a challenge for your *Shock* skills as any other. Basically, your aim is to reach room 20, high up and seemingly unattainable on the north wall. The process to get there can be split into three easy steps:

1) Firstly, face east and use boost to fly into the nook at A. Destroy the camera and look down. See lots of shapes below? Good. These are nasty, little RepairBots and they have to be destroyed. Do this by lobbing a few frag grenades below and then jumping down yourself. There may be a few stragglers so watch out.

2) Search all the crates and then make your way around to D. Destroy the crate here and you should see a switch on the floor. Flicking the switch enables the flickering force bridge around the circumference so you can reach room 20, but also, alas, opens the doors at C, freeing very nasty, angry, little Cyborg warriors.

3) Shoot as many as these warriors as you can from below and then make your way back to your starting position. Cross each section of the force bridge and save every single time you manage it. Eventually, you will reach room 20.

Aside from the goodies, room 20's main prize is the lumps of plastique. Take FOUR of these and leave the rest. It's all you need.

BACK

Back on the beaten track; ignore room 23 for the time being (the door is blocked by Shodan security) and head for 27. Watch out here – about four zero-G mutants are floating above your head. The next stop is room 31 – the most annoying room in the game. Basically, the aim is get past the two grates and into the corridor at 30. I used the jump jets (on level five) to flick the switch high in the north-east corner of the room which opens access to 30. Technically, you can flick the switch in the north-west corner (which deactivates a gravity lift) and then fling yourself against the green arrows on the western wall. Apparently, these cause you to stick to the walls, enabling you to then reach the essential north-east switch – we never managed to do it – if you can't either, progress to level five and retrieve those jump jets. For the time being, however, let's assume you managed to get to 30. Alongside some juicy goodies (including, ironically enough, said jump jets) you should find the last camera on the level which, when destroyed, will lower the security level to zero per cent. This means you can head straight for door 23 and into room 22, where you'll find Sabo's log. He tells you the last digit for the storage room door is also an "8". Head straight back to seven and key in "848". The door will open and the E-suit beyond will be yours.

Now return to the cargo lift and select level five. Ready your weapon...

ABBREVIATIONS USED

Batt	Battery pack (30 per cent energy back)
Berserk	Berserk patch (increases upper body strength but causes hallucinations)
DC clip	Riot Gun rounds
Detox	Detoxification patch (cures bio contamination and radiation)
EMP	Energy Drain grenade
Gas	Gas grenades
Frag	Fragmentation grenade
Hollow 2100	Hollow tip shells for Magnum 2100
I-CAD batt	I-CAD battery (100 per cent energy)
Logic	Logic Probe
MagPulse	MagPulse clip
Mark three Mag	Mark three Magnesium Shells
Medi	Medical Patch (+10 per cent health)
Mine	Landmines
ML Standard	ML-Pistol Standard rounds
Nitro	Nitro-glycerine grenades
Needle	Needles darts
Splinter	AM Flechette splinter rounds
Stamup	Stamina boost
Shkr	Earthshaker grenade
Tranq	Tranquilliser darts
Teflon	ML-Pistol Teflon rounds

Okay, okay. We're getting there. Albeit, gradually.

Level five, the flight deck, is not too hard, but it's quite windey and you can easily miss passages. So go slowly. Also, the regeneration bay is hard to reach on this level, so just take it easy. The layout, just like all the others, is the old central-hub and surrounding sections ploy. To the north is flight bay one; to the south, bays two and three; to the south-west, bay four; and to the south, the flight deck.

As you enter the level, you receive e-mail from Pavorski on the flight deck (remember her from level two?). She and her companions are on their last legs and need help, desperately. I wouldn't rush to the flightdeck at 30 if I were you; no matter how quickly you get there, she'll be dead. Take, then, a leisurely stroll around the main corridor, making sure you find the hidden door at seven (and the Energy Station at nine). Head clockwise around the main hub and go directly to Diego's office at 15 (watch out for the zero-G mutant) to find some interesting documents on his whereabouts and his role in the whole Shodan affair. Note the lift at 14 to level six (ignore it for now) and head instead for room 17. Dispatch the SEC-1 robots you find there and jack into CyberSpace.

After a fraught encounter with the Cyber minions, you should come out with Bay door three (16) and the Armoury door (18) unlocked. Plunder the armoury and then head to flight bay one (13) for a gruesome clue to what happened to the personnel on this level.

Go back to the central hub, round to 21, and explore the two flight bays (23 and 25). Watch out – these areas are densely populated with robots and mutants. You'll notice the escape pods at 24. You cannot get into these at the moment, so ignore them. Instead traverse you way towards the bio-hazard area at 26 (if you've picked up the E-suit from level four, then you're laughing). Explore this region thoroughly. Don't miss the regeneration bay at 29, and then head for the flight deck at 30. Everyone's dead of course, but you'll find the Cortex Reaver easy to dispatch. Pavorski's last log makes

LEVEL FIVE EQUIPMENT

WEAPONS	UPGRADES
Mark three Assault Rifle	Turbo-motion Booster v.2
Magnum 2100	Target Identifier v.2
	Energy Shield v.2
	Lantern v.2
	Jump Jets v.1

LEVEL FIVE

LEVEL FIVE (Flight Deck)

1 Expect e-mail
2 LOG (Travers)
3 BIOHAZARD AREA
4 Switch
5 First aid
6 LOG (McDan). Crates (two EMP)
7 Hidden door
8 Genius, medi, conc
9 ENERGY STATION. Mark Three Assault Rifle Mark three Mag shells
10 Two Batt
11 Tricky, floaty lifts
12 Cyborg warrior, five tranq, LOG (Schuler)
13 FLIGHT BAY one. Cyborg Assassin, LOG (Travers)
14 Lift to level six
15 Diego's office. LOG (Diego), Zero-G mutant
16 Locked doo.
17 CYBERJACK. three SEC-1 robots.
18 Two Hollow 2100, MagPulse, medi, mine, two conc
19 Magnum 2100
20 Turbo-motion Booster v.2, LOG (Kell)
21 Entrance to Flight Bay two
22 Two SEC-1 robots
23 FLIGHT BAY two. LOG (Kell.
24 Lifepods
25 FLIGHT BAY three. Two Avian Mutants, one Autobom.
26 BIOHAZARD AREA. Lots of robots
27 First aid
28 BIOHAZARD AREA. Two Splinter, LOG (Travers)
29 REGENERATION BA.
30 FLIGHT DECK. Cortex Reaver, Target Identifier v.2, LOG (Pavorksi), Mark Three Assault Rifle, three mines, 2100 heavy, DC clip
31 FLIGHT BAY four. LOG (McDan)
32 AUTOBOMB ABOVE!
33 LOG (Travers)
34 Energy Shield v.2, magpulse, SEC-1 robots, ER-60 Blaster
35 First Aid, two detox, two EMP, mine
36 Jump Jets v.1, Lantern v.2, first aid, 2100
37 ENERGY STATION, two I-CADD, one batt

disturbing reading. It seems Shodan has arranged a contingency plan should his "mutate all of mankind" plan fail. He intends to use the station's four high-powered antennas to download himself into the Earth's computer network. Oh dear. Anyway, ignore this new piece of good news for the time being. Instead, head for flight bay four (31) and solve the puzzle to create the force bridge at 11. We didn't manage to create a complete force bridge. You can get over it if there's one piece missing. On your way back round to get up to 11, pop into 33, crawl through the triangular walkway and explore areas 34 and 35 for more goodies. Go round to 11 and explore section 36 to find the jump jets and a new version of the lantern hardware. Now would be a good time, if you have not already done it, to go back and complete level four. Otherwise, your aim should now be level six. Before you go, jump jet across to 37 and reap the harvest of batteries therein.

Level six, the executive level, is one of the largest and hardest levels in the game. It's split into two distinct sections and, for once, avoids the typical central hub design of the other two levels.

The first section, to the north, where the lifts from levels three and five take you, contains the lifts to two groves (Gamma and Delta at 10 and 15 respectively) as well as a Cyberjack (at five), and the Admin access card (22) which will allow you access to the second section. The level is also massively populated with magnum-armed Exec-Bots (give them a dose of their own medicine) as well as a reasonable scattering of warrior and SEC-1 robots.

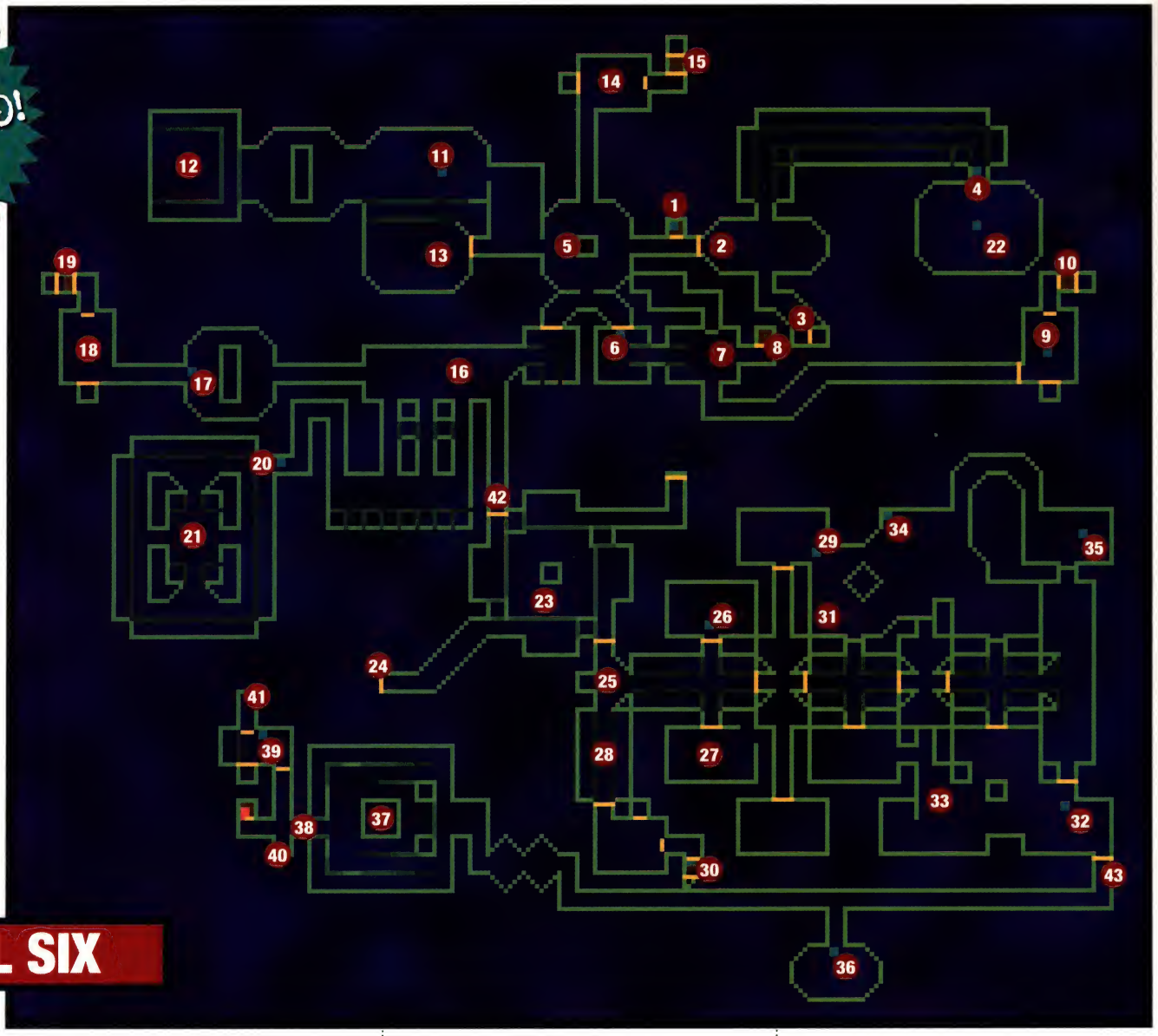
Your objective here is to jettison the virus-infected Beta grove (accessed at 30). To do this, you have to enter the two remaining groves (Alpha and Delta – Gamma grove has already been jettisoned), find and then enable their individual jettison controls, and then flip the jettison master control at 40. Then you have to go to the grove lounge that you want to jettison and pull the lever there. This is no mean feat.

Your best bet, to start off with, is to explore the first section of the level six and the two groves you can get to. You can give yourself a head start by jacking into Cyberspace at five and unlocking the Beta Grove elevator and the storage room door (at 39) from there. Next, find the regeneration bay at three and activate it. Also, while you're here, thoroughly explore areas 12, 11, 13, 16, and 21 for mega goodies. Aaron's log at 12 will tell you of a secret crawlway to the CPU room and the master jettison control, while Perry log's will inform you that an "executive maintenance conduit code" is needed to get through the door, and that Shodan has been flashing the code on the screens, at seven, for days. Room 21 is of particular interest, not only for the all-powerful RailGun hidden therein, but your first encounter with a Cyborg Enforcer: tough pieces of cybernetics which are regular features of later levels. Before you explore the groves, take a moment to collect the Admin access card from the banquet hall at 22 (it's buried under some body-parts, so look carefully).

THE GROVES

The two groves you can reach at 15 and 10 are quite nasty pieces of work. Populated with Gor-Tigers, mutated planets, sponge-throwing mutants, and SEC-1 robots, and with all manner of uppy-downy bits in their layout, it's quite easy to expire in an untimely fashion. Also, there are no regeneration bays in the groves, so if you die, you're dead. The best strategy, if you think you're going to cop it, is to high tail it back ☞

SPOILED!



LEVEL SIX

to the lift and get back to level six pronto. And then die.

Basically, you need to get to the jettison enable controls on each grove, but before that you invariably have to destroy all the cameras. That's not too much hassle – there are only about ten per grove – but they are tucked away, so keep your eyes peeled. The moment you've enabled the jettison controls, get out. Don't waste time questing for goodies. You'll just get killed.

BACK TO LEVEL SIX

Once you've enabled both accessible groves, you're ready for the second section of level six. With the Admin access card you'll be able to enter room 23. This area is a bit nasty. There are Exec-Bots and SEC-1 robots lurking in all corners. The best strategy is to crawl into the room, pick off the robots on the first level, and then, still crawling, lob a couple of grenades into the belly of the room. That'll do it. Once you are victorious, explore the area of interconnecting corridors beyond, not missing the energy station at 25. Watch out – Exec Bots doth prowl this area. Note that the Beta lift is at 30 (don't go there yet), and aim towards room 33, exploring every nook and cranny en route. Open the door at 43 with the correct code, which is 711, and then crawl your way through to 36 where you will find the CPU room. Destroy the nodes here, note down the number on the monitor (as ever), and then crawl further on to 37. WATCH OUT! Before you enter room 37, tool up, heal up, stick your shield on and pray. We're talking about six Exec-Bots and three SEC-1 robots. Dispatch these babies very carefully and then leap down and thumb the switch at 38. Then run, run, RUN! The very tough Cyborg of Edward Diego will appear and attempt (probably very successfully) to kill you. To dispatch the Cyborg, get back up to the crawlway and lob profuse amounts of grenades in his general direction. Once he's gone, you may think you have killed him. Big mistake. He transported out before you killed him. He'll crop up later. We assure you.

In the meantime, enter his office. Note the master jettison switch. You can't pull it yet – you need to yank the jettison enable in Beta grove first. However, you can plunder the storage room at 39 (which can be opened from Cyberspace at five). While you're there, open the experimental teleport device and warp to 41 in the north. A neat short cut, non? Heal up and head for the Beta grove lift at 30. Charge up at 25 and make sure you're packing as many first-aid kits and battery packs as possible.

BETA GROVE...

...It's a nightmare. There's no map for this section, basically because all you have time for is to find the jettison enable switch and get the hell out. The whole level is one big bio-hazard area. If you don't have the E-suit (from level four), you might as well not bother. The only way to survive is to pack yourself with some serious hardware (the Magnum 2100 or the flechette), don't bother with your shield (the E-suit needs all the energy you have), and take a reflex patch before you go up there. If you're low on health or energy, swallow those first-aid kits and batts big time.

TO-ING AND FRO-ING

If you survive Beta grove intact and also manage to flip the jettison enable, you now have license to return to the master jettison at 40 and pull that big ole' switch. Unfortunately, a relay is malfunctioning and it doesn't work. This means that you have to return to level three and fix the

LEVEL SIX (Executive Level)

1 Lift to level five
2 Three SEC-1 robots
3 REGENERATION BAY
4 Two Exec-Bots. LOG (Aaron)
5 Main hub. CYBERJACK. LOG (Aaron)
6 One Cyborg warrior. One Exec-Bot.
7 Monitors
8 Lift to level three
9 Alpha grove access
10 Lift to G1 (Alpha)
11 One Exec-Bot. Two Cyborg warriors
12 Two Viewing Room. Medi. LOG (Aaron). LOG (Perry)
13 Target Identifier v.3
14 Delta grove access. Night Sight v.1
15 Lift to G4 (delta)
16 Cyborg warrior, Hopper, three Exec-Bots one MagPulse.
17 Exec-Bot.
18 GAMMA GROVE access.
19 Lift to G3 (gamma).
20 Servobot.
21 Enforcer Cyborg, three Exec-Bots, four ServoBots. RailGun. Batt.
22 ADMIN CARD. two Flechette.
23 Two SEC-1 robots, two Exec-Bots
24 You can't get through these
25 ENERGY STATION. LOG (Perry)
26 Medi, first aid
27 Two medi
28 Two stamup.
29 Two Gor Tigers
30 Beta lift
31 Cabinet (medi)
32 Switch
33 WATCH OUT! AUTOBOMBS!
34 Two deto.
35 Two ML, first aid, switch
36 CPU ROOM. Batt. Bio Monitor v.2. AM Hornet
37 Two SEC-1 robots, five Exec-Bots. LOG (Wilkin)
38 Edward Diego Cyborg
39 LOG (Diego), papers, MagPulse, shkr, nitro, 2100, two conc
40 JETTISON ENABLE MASTER SWITCH
41 Experimental teleport
42 ADMIN access required
43 Conduit access door. Code=711

LEVEL SIX EQUIPMENT

WEAPONS	UPGRADES	ACCESSES
RailGun	Night Sight v.1	Admin
	Bio-Monitor v.2	
	Target Identifier v.3	

problem. Hurray.

Returning promptly to level three, you'll find two things: a) the previously-locked doors to the maintenance areas are now unlocked, and b) all those nasty, invisible mutants are back in force. In a nut-shell here's what you must do:

1) Go to the maintenance office at four and collect the log which has now been downloaded in the obvious receptacle.
2) It tells you Relay 428 has malfunctioned and gives you an incomprehensible map to help you find it.
3) Go straight to Relay 428 (at 25), watching your step – SEC-1 robots are all over the place – and destroy all the cameras you see.
4) Double click an interface demodulator on the faulty relay. It will be fixed.
5) Explore the remaining three maintenance areas, destroying cameras and robots until the security level has dipped to zero per cent.
6) Go back to the maintenance office and open the door at five (previously blocked by Shodan Security).
7) Note the retinal scan lock. Use Abe Ghiran's decapitated head (You'll find it at 24, remember? And we told you to keep it?) on the lock.
8) Enter the room beyond and scoop up the E-suit v.2 (radiation protection suit).
9) Don't forget to explore the secret door at eight.
10) Return to level six and go straight to the master jettison enable at 40.
11) Pull the switch. BE CAREFUL. The very moment you flick the switch, lots of robots descend on your position. Nasty.
12) Dispatch said robots and teleport back to 41.
13) Make your way back to the Beta grove lounge. Watch out here too – the place is swamped in virus mutants.
14) Pull the jettison switch.
15) BOMBS AWAY!

Hurray! You've scuppered Shodan's plans for ever. But what's this? An e-mail from Rebecca. Shodan is attempting to download himself into the Earth's central computer network using the antennas on level seven? Oh no! It'll just have to wait until next month.... ZZ

WIN £50

Send, send, send is what we say. £50, £50, £50 is what we pay. Senders of printed complete spoils and the Hack Of The Month win £50. All other hacks and tips disciples receive a free game (please give five choices). Please allow 28 days after publication for receipt of prizes. Make solutions as brief as possible, and any hacks/cheat/cracks clearly explained and preferably in *debug* format. Send to David McCandless at:

SPOILED!, *TROUBLESHOOTER*, *PC ZONE*, 19 BOLSOVER STREET, LONDON W1P 7HJ

ALPHA GROVE

ALPHA GROVE (G1)

1 JETTISON ENABLE
2 MagPulse
3 Blocked by SHODAN security
4 MagPulse, berserk, reflex, detox
5 RW-4S ion rifle, berserk, stamup

DELTA GROVE

DELTA GROVE (G4)

1 Magpulse
2 JETTISON ENABLE
3 MagPulse
4 DC slugs, one needle, two medi
5 ENERGY STATION. Energy Shield v.2

BETA GROVE

EXTREME BIOHAZARD AREA
NO DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE

BUYERS GUIDE

Welcome to the all-singing, all-dancing *PC Zone* Buyers Guide that is to gaming what the BR timetable is to trainspotters. You name it, it's here – painstakingly compiled by our very own engine driver.

Issue 1 – April 1993

Dune II
(89: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Strategy £35.99
Civilization meets *Sim City* in a frantic spice 'em up.

Lemmings 2: The Tribes
(88: Recommended) Psygnosis – Puzzle Game £39.99
A brilliant reworking of one of the best computer games ever written.

Ragnarok
(60) Mirage – Board Game £35.99
As the great man said: if you like this sort of thing, this sort of thing you like. Let down by too many inessential, flashy bits and not enough on the main, interesting idea. As stand-alone shareware, *The King's Table* would rate 75%.

Reach For The Skies
(52) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £35.99
Uninspired WW2 flight sim with pretensions to strategy that don't stand up to close inspection.

Shadoworlds
(60) Krisalis – Role-Playing Game £34.99
We asked a hundred people who'd played *Shadoworlds* if they thought it was a damn good game with a smart control system. They said "Yes". Our survey said "Erk-err". Sorry, they lose.

Stunt Island
(82: Recommended) Infogrames – Flight Sim £49.99
A unique simulation that combines all the fun elements of flight sims with superb 3D construction, film and editing utilities. A bit on the pricey side, but good value for film buffs nonetheless.

Tegel's Mercenaries
(50) Electronic Arts – Strategy – Deleted
Not funny. Not entertaining. And not very good.

The Complete Chess System
(80: Recommended) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Chess £34.99
Good enough for the expert, easy enough for the beginner.

The Legend Of Myra
(65) Grandslam – Puzzle 14.99 – £10 direct
One of the best *Boulderdash* clones to appear recently. Hardly original, but fun for a while if you've got fast reflexes.

Transarctica (CD)
(55) Simarils – Strategy £39.99
Reads a lot better than it plays. Very disappointing.

Ultima Underworld II: Labyrinth Of Worlds
(94: Classic) Origin – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Just go out now and buy it, okay.

Issue 2 – May 1993

Archer Maclean's Pool
(87: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £25.99
Excellent pool game. An impressive, if not wildly different, sequel to *Whirlwind Snooker*.

Battlechess 4000
(81: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess £44.99
Brilliant, funny and with a workmanlike chess sim attached. But for how long will it stay funny?

Blade Warrior
(40) Zeppelin Games – Combat £9.99 (£12.99 CD)
Arcade combat jaunt with a smattering of detailed quest elements.

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space
(90: Classic) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
Testing strategy/historical simulation. Buy it.

Crystals Of Arborea
(47) Simarils – Role-Playing Game £2.99
A badly designed RPG with only its price to recommend it.

Heroquest
(66) Gremlin Graphics – Board Game £11.99
A good, but uninspired conversion of the classic board game.

Jordan In Flight
(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99
Looks good, plays okay. There's just not enough to it, and it's a bit too easy.

Metal Mutants
(45) Simarils – Combat £2.99
Impress your friends – this disk makes an unusual coaster that will brighten up any coffee table.

Ringworld
(80: Recommended) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
An engaging interactive point 'n' click sci-fi romp.

Shadow Of The Comet
(87: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
A successful attempt to recreate the work of Lovecraft for game players. A must buy.

Space Quest V: Roger Wilco The Next Mutation
(72) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
Better than the usual twee nonsense from Sierra.

Spear Of Destiny
(60) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Out classed, out of time and overpriced.

Storm Master
(70) Simarils – Strategy £12.99
An attractively presented and absorbing strategy game.

Veil Of Darkness
(70) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £35.99
Good script, easy to play but a little short.

Wacky Funsters
(30) Accolade – Compendium (not available in the UK)
The game never gets beyond being the equivalent of an enjoyable demo.

X-Wing
(88: Recommended) LucasArts – Space Combat £45.99
Fabbo space-based shoot 'em up.

Xenobots
(75) Electronic Arts – Combat £39.99
A spanking good, strategic shoot 'em up, which has too short a life expectancy for our liking.

Zool
(85: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics – Platform Game £34.99.
The best platform game released for the PC so far.

Issue 3 – June 1993

DJ Puff
(62) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99
Okay, but it looks like an 8-bit console game.

Dogfight
(50) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Far too easy, major flight model discrepancies and grass can kill you. All in all, a pile of jobs.

International Athletics
(55) Zeppelin Games – Sport £9.99
Fun as far as it goes, which isn't far.

International Rugby Challenge
(67) Domark – Sport £34.99,
Scores a try, but doesn't quite manage the conversion.

Serpent Isle: Ultima VII Part Two
(89: Recommended) Origin – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Origin's flair for storytelling and atmosphere creating pays off once again.

Spaceward Ho!
(25) New World Computing – Space Combat £44.99
There are better strategy games for free.

Strike Commander
(65) Origin – Flight Sim £44.99
There are lots of brilliant bits, but unfortunately there's also an equal number of "unbrilliant" bits.

The Greatest
(70) Beau Jolly – Compilation £39.99
A good way to save £81.98 and try out some good, if slightly old, games.

The Legacy
(60) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £44.99
A brave attempt to create a gothic role-playing game which doesn't quite gel.

The Terminator 2029
(50) Bethesda Softworks – Combat £29.99
Terminal Case.

Tony La Russa II
(73) SSI – Sport – Deleted
An exceptionally-detailed baseball game, and almost a very good one.

Unlimited Adventures
(59) SSI – Role-Playing Game £37.99
Competent, but not the most essential purchase ever.

Wayne Gretzky Hockey 3
(69) Bethesda Softworks – Sport £44.99
May appeal to buffs, but has nothing to attract the casual browser.

World Cricket
(30) Zeppelin Games – Sport £9.99
Fails to provide either action or strategy.

Issue 4 – July 1993

Boston Bomb Club
(70) Simarils – Puzzle £9.99
Fairly basic but fairly addictive puzzler.

Cohort II
(30) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
All the fun and entertainment of a barium meal.

Eye of the Beholder III: Legend Of Myth Drannor
(64) SSI – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Has none of the feel or atmosphere of its prequels. Strictly for the yellow-fingernailed brigade only, I'm afraid.

Freddy Pharkas Frontier Pharmacist
(85: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
An utterly absorbing, entertaining and difficult point 'n' click adventure with some incredibly naff in-jokes.

Maelstrom
(70) Empire – Strategy £39.99
You've read the review – you decide.

Nippon Safes Inc
(66) Global Software – Adventure £34.99
Great plot, nice artwork, decent price but nothing out of the ordinary.

Populous And The Promised Lands
(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Strategy £14.99
One of the greatest games ever written – buy it!

SimLife For Windows
(69) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Strategy £35.99
If you liked *SimEarth*... Fun, but not lasting fun.

Space Hulk
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
Death, destruction, blood, gore, tension, fear, and a damn good game as well.

Starblade
(22) Simarils – Space combat/Trading £9.99
It crashes a lot, but why care?

Strike Fleet
(75) Hit Squad – Wargame £14.99
A worthwhile addition to naval sims.

Super Ski II
(20) Microids – Sport £9.99
Sad, speccy ski game.

The 7th Guest
(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99 (CD)
Technologically okay, but disappointingly weak on gameplay.

Tom Landry Strategic Football
(75) Merit Software – Sport £44.99
A very good, strategic, American football sim that could do with more player involvement.

V For Victory 3 – Market Garden
(82: Recommended) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £34.99
Why bother with boards, hexes and counters when you've got games like this?

Where In Space Is Carmen Sandiego?
(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Edutainment £39.99
Educational, fun and highly recommended.

Issue 5 – August 1993

10 Intelligent Strategy Games
(60) Oxford Softworks – Compendium £34.99
Good sampler and cheap if you need them all.

688 Attack Sub
(78) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99
Sub-standard? Definitely not!

Air Bucks v1.2
(49) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
A potentially interesting variation on a theme, which fails largely due to being more than a tad unexciting.

Betrayal At Krondor
(91: Classic) Dynamix – Role-Playing Game £44.99
The licence makes a lot of difference – great story, great game.

Championship Manager '93
(75) Domark – Sport £29.99
An undoubtedly "serious" management game that's involving, but occasionally unnecessarily slow.

Chess Maniac 5 Billion & 1
(60) Spectrum Holobyte – Chess £44.99
Falls between two stools – and I'm being very nice here.

Dizzy Collection
(60) Codemasters – Compilation £35.99
Contains: *Fast Food Dizzy, Fantasy World Dizzy, Kwik Snack, Dizzy Prince Of Yolkfolk, Magicland Dizzy.*
A poor egg-scuse to make totally unfunny egg yolks. Just about playable.

Ishar 2: Messengers Of Doom
(50) Simarils – Role-Playing Game £32.99,
Would have been a real contender if it had been released a year or two earlier.

James Pond 2: Codename Robocod
(87: Recommended) Millennium – Platform Game £30.99 – Only available in a compilation
"Nifty scrolling, great gameplay" is our first remark on playing Robocod, closely followed by "Has anyone got a pair of sunglasses?"

Premier Manager
(59) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £29.99
Not recommended as a full-priced game – it would make a good, fun budget game.

Prince Of Persia 2: The Shadow And The Flame
(89: Recommended) Broderbund – Platform Game £39.99
We reckon they could have done more with it, but it's a corker nevertheless.

Protostar
(80: Recommended) Tsunami – Space Combat/Trading £39.99
A slick game that's full of nice touches and good ideas, but if you're not patient, don't bother.

Syndicate
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
Incredibly violent, completely amoral and brilliant fun.

The Cycles
(55) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Sadly, an overpriced and underpowered ride into the past.

War In The Gulf
(81: Recommended) Empire – Wargame £34.99
Another great set of blood-thirsty missions for one of the most playable 3D battle sims ever.

Worlds Of Legend
(73) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £25.99
Perfectly reasonable but rather old-fashioned fantasy RPG jobbie.

WWF Wrestlemania
(58) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99
Fairly limited beat 'em up, which was delivered much better on the console.

Issue 6 – September 1993

Blade Of Destiny: Realms Of Arkania
(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Large in scale, absorbing to play – but more suited to "serious" role-players than your average gamer.

Blue Force
(35) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
Tiresome controls and sloppy design mar what could have been a decidedly average adventure.

Caesar's Palace For Windows
(65) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Casino Compendium £35.99
A good compilation; unnervingly addictive.

X-Wing: groove on down to the old "destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess" tune.

Fields Of Glory
(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Wargame £44.99
A brilliant sim that puts even the most reluctant wargamer right into the thick of it. Only its speed prevents it from being awarded Classic status.
Flashback
(89: Recommended) US Gold – Platform Game £37.99
It's *Prince Of Persia* in the future (but this time he's got a gun).
Lotus – The Ultimate Challenge
(68) Gremlin Graphics – Driving Game £34.99
Nothing particularly new, but good fun, especially in two player mode.
Maniac Mansion 2: Day Of The Tentacle
(85: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £42.99
Lovely graphics, good music, quite challenging but a bit too American for my roast beef and dumplings taste buds.
MIG-29: Fulcrum
(70) Domark – Flight Sim £14.99
Almost no scenery, but a nice flight model.
Monopoly
(75) Supervision – Board Game £34.99
A faithful conversion, which is slightly too flashy for its own good.
Napoleonics
(79) On-Line Entertainment – Wargame Compendium – Deleted £34.99
Three excellent and original Napoleonic wargames for tactical experts.
Open Golf
(50) Ocean – Sport – Deleted
A disappointing foray into the world of golf sims from Ocean.
Pinball Dreams
(78) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Simulation £37.99
As enjoyable as the real thing, but a bit on the pricey side.
Prehistorik 2
(50) Titus – Platform Game £7.99
A very average platform game, which competes with some budget titles but little else.
Rags To Riches
(60) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
Lacks excitement; unlikely to have a long life.
Return Of The Phantom
(73) MicroProse – Adventure £44.99
Delightfully atmospheric and aimed at beginners, but a tad too short and easy to justify the price.
Sensible Soccer
(70) Renegade – Sport £34.99
The best football game around for the PC, but still not as good as it should've been.
Space Legends
(75) Empire – Compilation £34.99
You'll like at least two out of three.
The Immortal
(70) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99
At least four Sunday afternoons' play we reckon.
Tornado
(93: Classic) Digital Integration – Flight Sim £44.99
The more you play, the deeper it gets – eventually you'll need a bathyscape. Not for beginners.

Issue 7 – October 1993

Ambush At Sorinor
(70) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Short, sharp missions, and plenty of them, make this an interesting strategy game.
Archer Maclean's Pool (256 colour version)
(88: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £30.99
Exactly what it claims to be – the same game with more colours. Score assumes you don't have the original.
Caesar Deluxe
(70) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
More user-friendly than its predecessor but the game remains the same.
Clash Of Steel
(67) SSI – Wargame £39.99
Intricate and well presented wargame with plenty of appeal for the dedicated wargamer.
Day Of The Tentacle (CD)
(87: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £45.99
A very taxing, very American adventure, with some of the best animation ever.
Dune (CD)
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
A shining example of a good game made into a great game for CD.
Eric The Unready (CD)
(77) Accolade – Adventure £34.99
Hilarious, but the creaky interface isn't so funny.
F-15 Strike Eagle II
(85: Recommended) Kixx – Flight Sim £16.99
It still holds its own in a dogfight.
Flames Of Freedom
(70) Kixx – Strategy/Arcade £9.99
A bit old, a bit saggy, but will still give purists much fun.
Galactic Warrior Rats
(75) Alternative Software – Arcade £9.99
Totally simple, totally basic, but quite good fun nevertheless.
Gunboat
(54) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99
A better idea than game.
Hardball
(20) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Interesting only as an example of how bad baseball games used to be.
Imperial Pursuit
(80: Recommended) LucasArts – Space Sim £19.99
Long, involving "story-driven" tour of duty, perfect for Skywalker-wannabes.
King's Quest VI (CD)
(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £49.99
Excellent use of a CD, despite the "soft" story.
Lands Of Lore
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Role-Playing Game £35.99
A tasty and involving reminder of what *Eye Of The Beholder III* could have been.
Legend Of Kyrandia (CD)
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
Stunning to look at, but not really challenging enough if you're the type who has played a lot of adventures before.
LHX Attack Chopper
(88: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99
Still one of the classic flight sims.
Loom
(72) Kixx – Adventure £14.99
Simple and enchanting adventure; an ideal game for beginners.
Mean 18"
(60) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99
Reasonable mid-table golf game.
MIG-29
(75) MicroProse – Flight Sim £19.99
An excellent add-on for *Falcon 3.0* fans, but nothing groundbreaking in flight sim terms.
NHL Hockey
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
A great version of a brilliant game.
Pirates Gold!
(75) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
As good as the original. Unfortunately, it almost is the original.
Railroad Tycoon Deluxe
(72) MicroProse – Strategy £39.99
Not significantly better than the original, but if you haven't got that then add 20% to the score.
Ringworld (CD)
(82: Recommended) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
An alternative to having it on disk; nothing more!
Rules Of Engagement 2
(91: Classic) Impressions – Strategy £44.99
A game of great depth and complexity.
Seal Team
(77) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up/Strategy £44.99
In storyboard form I imagine it looked fabulous. In transition to code, however, it feels like something has gone astray.
Simon The Sorcerer
(86: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £39.99
At last an Anglo answer to the average American adventure. Recommended.
The Lost Vikings
(80: Recommended) Interplay – Arcade £34.99
An excellent puzzle/platform/arcade game (categorise it yourself, we can't be bothered).
The Patrician
(65) Daze Marketing – Trading Sim £34.99
Desperate for a trading game set in the Hanseatic League but which could have been given more zap? Look no further.
Wing Commander Academy
(60) Origin – Flight Sim £19.99
This is only really worth it for *Wing Commander* combat addicts.

Issue 8 – November 1993

Battle Chess
(45) Interplay – Chess £44.99
Stalemate for the *Battlechess* series.
Blue Force (CD)
(40) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
A criminal waste of a CD.
Conquered Kingdoms
(71) Mirage – Wargame £44.99
The rather second rate packaging and laughable manual conceals a highly playable, fantasy wargame.
Cover Girl Strip Poker
(40) On-Line Entertainment – Card Game £34.99
An appallingly bad poker game; a weak excuse for some dirty pics.
Flight Simulator 5.0
(90: Classic) Microsoft – Flight Sim £35.00
The definitive flying simulation, but not the definitive flying "game".
Gear Works

Simon The Sorcerer: at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

(62) The Software Business – Puzzle Game £19.99
Not good enough for the price and not cheap enough for what it is.
Grand Prix Circuit
(50) Hit Squad – Driving £12.99
Playable but crap for the price.
Hard Drivin' 2
(30) Hit Squad – Driving £12.99
Unplayable and crap for the price.
Homeworld: Gateway II
(75) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Long, hard trek through pretty unatmospheric space.
Lord Of The Rings
(70) Interplay – Role-Playing Game £44.99
New and improved role-playing Tolkien jaunt for patient fantasy fans only.
Lost In Time
(69) Coktel Vision – Adventure £44.99
Tough, good looking adventure that comes a cropper at the end.
Motor Stars
(75) Revell – Racing £59.99
Sex on CD for kit-heads but coffee mat for everyone else.
Patriot
(45) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £44.95
A revolutionary but seriously flawed approach to land-based wargaming.
Shadowlands
(65) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £12.99
One for the RPG addicts.
Solitaire's Journey
(87) Mirage – Puzzle £44.99
The closest that solitaire fans will get to Heaven on Earth.
Stronghold
(80: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99
Extremely addictive even if you'd normally steer clear of D&D™.
Super Space Invaders
(75) Hit Squad – Arcade £9.99
Here's a blast from the past for less than a round of drinks.
T2
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade £29.99
Mindless, chaotic and highly addictive.
The Silver Seed (Ultima VII Add-On Disk)
(50) Origin – Role-Playing Game £19.99
An utterly pointless addition to a brilliant game. One can only turn to Origin and ask "Why?"
Troddlers
(79) SCI – Puzzle Game £29.99
Not at all bad, but it smacks too much of other games to achieve classic status.

Issue 9 – December 1993

Blue Angels
(30) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £12.99
Interesting, but hardly spectacular.
Brutal Football
(65) Millennium – Sport £29.99
Too much violence, not enough game.
Chuck Yeager's Air Combat
(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99
Living proof that pensioners still have what it takes.
Clix
(62) The Genesis Arcade – Puzzle Game £14.99
Nice idea, shame about the gameplay.
Cogito
(57) Mindscape – Puzzle Game £29.99
A reasonably entertaining and challenging puzzle game, but only for the patient.
Dark Sun: Shattered Lands
(83: Recommended) SSI – Role-Playing Game £45.99
The next best thing to an *Ultima*.
Dino Dini's Goal
(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £35.99,
Kick Off with sideways options (but it works). Not as good as *Sensible Soccer*.
Dracula
(65) Psygnosis – Arcade £39.99
A good, challenging game, but the execution should have been better.
Frontier: Elite II
(95: Classic) Gametek – Space Trading Sim £39.99
Without doubt an unrivalled classic; nothing else even comes close.
Front Page Sports Football Pro
(85: Recommended) Dynamix – Sport £39.99
The best around, but you'll definitely need a high-spec machine.
Gobliiins
(50) Coktel Vision – Puzzle – £39.99
An unimproved CD version of an original but inspired game.
Hook
(35) Hit Squad – Adventure £12.99
At last we have perhaps the most faithful film conversion around. The movie was a turkey, so is the game.
Jack The Ripper
(39) Mirage – Adventure £44.99
Ugly, unpleasant and boring. Give it a job with *PC Zone*.
Jutland
(72) On-Line Entertainment – Strategy £59.99
Good but sadly there are too many unnecessary gimmicks.
Kasparov's Gambit
(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess £44.99
Excellent chess game with attitude and personality.
Magic Candle II
(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99
Good as an RPG, excellent as a budget.
NFL Coaches Club Football
(70) MicroProse – Sport £44.99
A good attempt that's let down by the rather poor passing system.
Privateer
(75) Origin – Flight Sim £49.99
Wing Commander fans will love this. *X-Wing* fans won't. It's as simple as that.
Sim Farm
(79) Maxis – Strategy £34.99
Quite good if you like farming, but not as good as *Sim City*.
Steel Thunder
(60) Hit Squad – Arcade £12.99
Reasonable fun, but not one you'd come back to.
Street Fighter II
(81: Recommended) US Gold – Beat 'Em Up – £29.99
Addictive and violent but the cross over to the PC hindered unless you invest in a game pad.
Strike Commander: Tactical Operations
(80: Recommended) Origin – Flight Sim £19.99
Essential if you're determined to get the most out of *Strike Commander*.
V for Victory 4: Gold–Juno–Sword
(78) Three-Sixty Pacific £34.99
It's still the best computer wargames system but it needs a shot in the arm... or leg... or both even.
When Two Worlds War
(63) Impressions – Wargame £34.99
An unattractive attempt at a strategy wargame that fails to add anything new – including excitement. Give us dice and counters any day...

IndyCar Racing: great graphics and playability make this the best ever driving game.

Issue 10 – January 1994

8 Ball Deluxe
(75) Supervision – Pinball Game £34.99
Technically, the best pinball game there is, but there's not enough of it for the price.

20th Century Alamanac
(30) The Software Business – General Interest £74.99
Outrageous price for a poor substitute for a hardback encyclopaedia.

Aces Over Europe
(78) Dynamix – Flight Sim £44.99
It's better than *Aces Of The Pacific*, but so it should be. Dated, but still very playable.

Air Combat Classics
(60) US Gold – Flight Sim £45.99
Shows just how far things have progressed in five years.

Alien Breed
(75) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
Enjoyable, undemanding shoot 'em up that comes into its own in two-player mode.

Dracula Unleashed
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £39.99
Classy adventure that you can really get your teeth into.

Dreamlands
(72) Daze Marketing – Compendium £29.99
The ideas and graphics are interesting, the gameplay, however, isn't.

Goblins 2
(67) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £44.99
Zany puzzle game, frustrating at times but mostly good fun.

IndyCar Racing
(93: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £44.99
The new definitive driving game. And it comes with a free moustache.

Innocent Until Caught
(84: Recommended) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99
Well worth nicking. Ho ho.

Jurassic Park
(73) Ocean – Adventure £34.99
Despite some irritating flaws, an atmospheric and addictive game.

Knights Of The Sky
(79) Kixx – Strategy £16.99
A game that's well worth buying for the two-player option alone.

Links Championship Course: Innisbrook
(75) US Gold – Sport £24.99
If you really want another *Links* course, then this is one.

Links
(80: Recommended) Kixx – Sport £16.99,
An excellent golf game for anyone with a less than ninja PC.

Lords Of Power
(85: Recommended) Ubisoft – Strategy £39.99
A first class simulation which you would be mad not to buy.

Network Q RAC Rally 2
(80: Recommended) Europress Software – Driving £34.99
A rather good addition to the current crop of driving games, if you can stand the opponent's amazing skills.

Newsweek Interactive
(30) The Software Business – General Interest £39.99
Over-priced, over-patronising and over here.

Night Shift
(70) Kixx – £12.99
A suitably frantic and frustrating puzzler.

Oceans Below
(70) The Software Business – Edutainment £39.99
Initially interesting, but unfortunately the novelty all too soon wears off. Strictly for scuba diving fans.

Protostar (CD)
(80: Recommended) Accolade – Space Sim £39.99
Absorbing, well designed and, if you can forgive its weaker moments, it'll keep you busy for ages.

Return To Zork (CD)
(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £49.99
Bad news for text-adventure purists who thought that *Zork* was sacred. Ha!

Return To Zork
(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £45.99
A highly imaginative and enjoyable adventure game with some very clever knobs attached.

Shadowcaster
(66) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Neither *Wolfenstein* nor *Underworld*. And not much in-between.

Speed Racer
(49) Accolade – Racing £39.99
Nice intro, shame about the game.

Star Trek: Judgement Rites
(79) Interplay – Adventure £44.99
The stories are poetic and the variety of gameplay is "fascinating" but it is not the best flight sim or adventure game.

Strike Squad
(25) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Just turn the page and get on with enjoying life, okay?

The Blue And The Gray
(78) Impressions – Wargame £39.99
Dedicated blood 'n' guts fans will find it a little simplistic, but it's a great all-round wargame with hidden depths and long term playability.

The Even More Incredible Machine
(89: Recommended) Dynamix 39.99
If you've never played *The Incredible Machine* now's the time to start.

World Class Rugby
(60) Audiogenic – Sport £14.99
Not really worth the waggle.

World War Two: Battles Of The South Pacific
(62) Mirage – Strategy/Action £44.99
Innovative mix of naval strategy and action. The gameplay doesn't quite live up to expectations –

Issue 11 – February 1994

Advantage Tennis
(55) Infogrames – Sport £35.99
Unexciting tennis game that lacks punch.

Alone in The Dark 2
(97: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure – £39.99
Absolutely Brilliant! What the PC was made for.

Alone in the Dark (CD)
(92: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
Still the best thing since sliced bread. Buy it.

B-Wing
(72) US Gold – Space Sim £19.99
Your sister either fancied Han Solo or Luke Skywalker. You'll either fancy B-Wing or, er, something else.

Capitol Hill (CD)
(75) Software Toolworks – Edutainment £39.99
Comprehensive introduction to American politics

Chessmaster 4000 Turbo
(90: Classic) Mindscape – Chess £34.99
Tough opponent: gentle teacher.

Critical Path (CD)
(72) Media Vision – Adventure £49.99
Slick and atmospheric but way too short.

Dungeon Hack
(62) SSI – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Not enough there. Not enough design options. Not enough gameplay. Very hardened and grizzled role-players only.

Fire And Ice
(75) Renegade – Platform Game £29.99
A fun, but difficult game, marred only by an over-inflated price and ridiculous copy protection.

Flight Sim Toolkit
(80: Recommended) Domark – Simulation £49.99
Recommended, but only if you find *Stunt Island* limiting. It can be very heavy going.

Global Dominaton
(65) Impressions – Strategy £39.99
Slick, addictive strategy game but it presents no long term challenge.

Goblins 3
(75) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £39.99
Good for beginners and a pleasant diversion for seasoned adventurers.

Kingmaker
(88: Recommended) US Gold – Board Game £37.99
Without doubt the best board game conversion for a long, long time.

Magic Boy
(60) Empire – Platform Game £25.99
Not very "magic" at all.

Master of Orion
(72) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
A good one for all the accountants out there.

Rebel Assault
(93: Classic) LucasArts – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
It's *Star Wars*. It's also the most important game to date.

Striker
(55) Elite – Sport £29.99
Another Paul Bodin penalty of the gamesplaying world.

Subwar 2050
(88: Recommended) MicroProse – Simulation £44.99
Easily the best "fun" simulation that MicroProse has produced.

The Labyrinth Of Time
(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Adventure £39.99
Beautiful, alluring, a touch slow and a little fussy. A quite superb adventure though.

The Terminator Rampage
(75) Bethesda Softworks – Arcade £39.99
Okay, but once you've seen *Doom*, you'll laugh in *Rampage*'s face and spill its pint.

VGA Planets
(70) PAW PBM – Role-Playing Game £24.99
A rather interesting type of role-playing game that takes some time, but is generally worth the wait.

Issue 12 – March 1994

Campaign
(52) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Dim-witted attempt at simulating armoured action – too buggy to recommend, despite colourful graphics and arcade sequences.

Championship Manager '94
(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's still the best (just).

Championship Manager Italia
(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's the best too, just with a few more noughts at the end of the transfer figures.

Combat Classics 2
(50) Empire – Flight Sim Compendium £34.99
Sadly, this compilation contains one classic and two rather second -rate duds.

Companions Of Xanth
(73) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Awful puns. Questionable Humour. Very *Monkey Island*-esque. What more could you want from an adventure?

Cyber Race
(64) Cyberdreams – Racing £44.99
Mildly entertaining for a quick blast, but that's about it.

Fury Of The Furries
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Puzzle/Platform Game £39.99
A riveting platform puzzler, but not for the easily frustrated.

Gabriel Knight
(92: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
Brilliant and frightening offering from Sierra.

Genesia
(83: Recommended) Mindscape – Strategy £34.99
A little bit of *Populous*, a little bit of *Civilisation*. **Hand Of Fate**
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment Adventure £39.99
You've got to hand it to Westwood, this is a bit of a stunner.

Heirs To The Throne
(43) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
If I got this kind of quality from a PD game I'd blinking well complain.

Indianapolis 500
(65) Hit Squad – Driving £14.99
A once-great giant succumbs to the ravages of time.

Leisure Suit Larry 6
(75) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £35.99
The best *Larry* yet; but he's getting way past his sell-by date.

Litil Divil
(90: Classic) Gremlin Graphics – Puzzle Game £39.99
An excellent puzzle game with wit and flair.

Police Quest 4: Open Season
(78) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A thoroughly professional job for those who can think and click at the same time.

Premier Challenge
(78) T'ai Chi – Sport £24.99
Design your own game. Boost this score.

Premier Manager 2
(65) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £34.99
It's better, but still too obsessed with interior decorating for my liking.

Shadow Of Darkness
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A compelling storyline makes up for the dull battle scenes.

The Incredible Toons
(82: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99
Zany, silly and highly addictive.

Issue 13 – April 1994

Archon Ultra
(78) US Gold – Strategy £39.99
More beat 'em up than strategy.

Beneath A Steel Sky
(83: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £39.99
Graphically good and pleasingly puzzling jaunt that you'll feel like returning to.

Conspiracy
(67) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
Takes all the fun out of Ruskie bashing.

D-Day
(38) US Gold – Wargame £35.99
D-Day lies bleeding in the no man's land of wargames.

Daemonsgate
(45) Gametek – Role-Playing Game £29.99
Out-dated, tedious and visually vestigial.

Doom
(96: Classic) iD Software – Arcade £34.99
The best arcade game and the best multi-player game ever. *Doom* is the best.

Hired Guns
(77) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Ishar 2 with robots.

Hot Sound And Vision
(85: Recommended) Interplay – General Interest £44.99
An outstanding collection.

Interplay's 10 Year Anthology
(85: Recommended) Interplay – Compendium £49.99
A cost-effective way to build an instant library of classic games.

Micro Machines
(70) Codemasters – Arcade £29.99
A good two-player game (if you have a decent PC).

Mortal Kombat
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
Not as good as the SNES *Street Fighter II*, but the best on the PC.

Nomad
(78) Gametek – Space Strategy £29.99
Good game if you're more into exploring than fighting.

Pinball Fantasies
(80: Recommended) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £37.95
The meanest machine of them all and a worthy successor to the original *Pinball Dreams*.

Reunion
(80: Recommended) Grandslam – Strategy £TBA
Reunion has something for everyone.

Sim City 2000
(92: Classic) Maxis – Strategy £39.99
Brilliant game that'll make you anally retentive in the extreme.

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary
(86: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure £49.99
A game boldly going where it's been before, just a little more vocally.

Strike Commander (CD)
(86: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Superior flight sim, but you need the hardware to match.

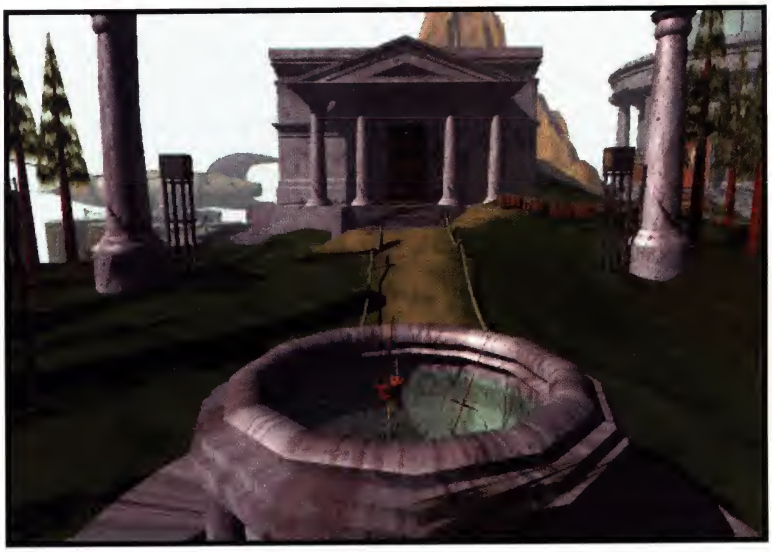
The Complete UMS
(58) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Both classics in their day, the two *UMS* games are a bit too long in the tooth to excite anyone but the real enthusiast.

The Lawnmower Man
(77) Sales Curve Interactive – Arcade £54.99
Excellently presented. Just a little more complexity in the gameplay and it would have been unreservedly recommended.

Winter Olympics
(64) US Gold – Sport £42.99
Has its moments, but you'll probably play it for a few hours and thereafter pick it up once a year if you get really bored.
Wizard
(73) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
A good stepping stone into the land of RPGs.

Issue 14 – May 1994

Air Transport Pilot (CD)
(70) RC Simulations – Simulation £79.95
Not my idea of fun but a reasonable effort for a simulation of this type.
Airlines
(20) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Strategy £39.99
Ugly, fiddly and totally boring.
Arena: The Elder Scrolls
(62) Bethesda Softworks – Role-Playing Game £45.99
Disappointing really.
Award Winner Gold Edition
(88: Recommended) Empire – Arcade £34.99
Superb quality games with unrivalled value for money. Buy it now!
Battle Isle 2
(91: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £54.99
Without a shadow of a doubt, the strategy game of the year.
Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)
(95: Classic) Interplay – Strategy – £39.99
A stunning improvement of an already classic game.
Cannon Fodder
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Great fun for all the wrong and right reasons.
CD-ROM Challenge Pack
(75) Software Toolworks – Compendium £39.99
Reasonable good compilation, but there are better ones around.
Championship Manager For Windows
(79) Domark – Sport £29.99
A wasted opportunity. Not as good as the DOS version.
D/Generation
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £19.99
Probably the best game that Windows users have ever played.
Excellent Games
(85: Recommended) Beau Jolly – Various £39.99
Great games at a great price. A compilation not to be missed, including *Populous 2*, *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*, *Car And Driver* and *Robocod*.
Fantastic Dizzy
(50) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99
Wrong time. Wrong format. Wrong price.
Gabriel Knight (CD)
(90: Classic)
Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99
Brooding, atmospheric thriller.
In Extremis
(67) US Gold – Arcade £37.99
You'll shriek! You'll shout! You'll yawn!
Johnny Quest
(12) Software Business – Arcade/Adventure £29.99
Can basically be summed up in one word. Dreadful.
Megarace
(65) Mindscape – Racing £39.99
A superb demonstration of what can be done graphically with CD-ROM... and how easy it is for gameplay to suffer as a result.
Merchant Prince
(82: Recommended) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Don't let the dodgy graphics fool you. If you give this game half a chance you'll be hooked.
Microcosm
(70) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
Brilliant graphics and excellent sound. Let down by limited gameplay.
NFL Pro League Football
(50) Digital Integration – Sport £39.99
As a play-editor it's okay, but playing the game itself is disappointing.
Privateer: Righteous Fire
(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Add-On £19.99
Privateer fans definitely won't be disappointed with this one.
Seawolf
(83: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
A highly atmospheric sub sim with a control interface from hell.
Starlord
(70) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
It could have been excellent. Could have been. Damn!
The Patrician (CD)
(70) Daze Marketing – Strategy £39.99
A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.
The Red Crystal
(43) Mirage – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.
Unnecessary Roughness
(66) Accolade – Sport £39.99
Best described as "alright". It's as good as most American footy sims.



Myst: "great graphics, what gameplay?" disease claims another hapless victim.

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Bloodnet
(75) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.
Carriers At War II
(63) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
For die-hard strategy aficionados.
Darkseed
(90: Classic) Cyberdreams – Adventure £44.99
If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the *Darkseed* affair.
Diggers
(40) Millennium – Puzzle Game £34.99
Mind-numbingly tedious.
Disney Animation Studio
(75) Infogrames – General Interest £99.99
More serious approach with superb sample animations that you can't use!
Dragonsphere
(69) MicroProse – Adventure £39.99
A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.
Evasive Action
(40) Mindscape – Simulation £34.99
So close, but more bugs than Watergate.
F1
(40) Domark – Sport £29.99
The champions of sport produce yet another world-beater.
Fleet Defender
(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.
Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop
(75) Empire – General Interest £49.99
Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.
Hornet Naval Strike Fighter
(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte – Flight Sim £TBA
As that well known saying goes: "If you like *Falcon 3*, you'll just love *Hornet*".
Myst
(67) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.
Pacific Strike
(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Miles better than *Strike Commander* but requires a state-of-the-art, ninja PC.
Pagan: Ultima VII
(78) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Without doubt a love/hate relationship for *Ultima* purists.
Ravenloft
(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £45.99
SSI has finally got "real" and produced a playable and accessible RPG.
Red Hell
(60) Cyberdreams – Adventure £39.99
The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.
RedShift
(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd – General Interest £89.00
A stunning program which will be hard to beat.
Sabre Team
(60) Krisalis – Strategy £29.99
This has all been done before, and done much better as well.
Shadowcaster
(70) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.
Spaceship Warlock
(70) Reactor/Ubisoft – Adventure £44.99
Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.
TFX
(80: Recommended) Ocean – Simulation £44.99
Great game with totally superfluous bells and whistles.
UFO Enemy Unknown
(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Brilliantly designed, perfectly implemented and totally absorbing.
Washington DC Scenery
(85: Recommended) Supervision – Flight Sim Add-On £39.99
One of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

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Castles II
(65) Interplay – Strategy £49.95
Interplay usually releases excellent games – this isn't one of them.
Comanche (CD)
(90: Classic) Optima – Flight Sim £49.99
Brilliant action-packed helicopter simulation at a great price on CD.
Companions Of Xanth (CD)
(84: Recommended) Accolade – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Great game on disk. Even better on CD.
Corridor 7
(55) Gametek – Arcade £19.99
Nothing new or exciting.
Detroit
(85: Recommended) Impressions – Strategy £39.99
An intriguing strategy/sim which boasts both originality and playability.
Dragon's Lair
(67) Elite Systems – Adventure £39.99
An interactive cartoon that's more "cartoon" than "interactive".
Eye Of The storm
(40) Rebellion – Space/Strategy £39.99
Very futuristic, very *Elite* and very, very crap.
Great Naval Battles 2
(86: Recommended) US Gold – Simulation £45.99
SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.
Hand Of Fate (CD)
(78) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £49.99
Good game, shame about the conversion. In this case, more equals less.
Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition
(85: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
A good golf game at an amazing price.
Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker
(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Sport £14.99
Dangerously addictive snooker sim.
Lucky's Casino Adventure
(60) Mirage – Card Game £44.99
Challenging, fun, totally addictive but a bit pricey.
Lure Of The Temptress
(55) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Old and fading.
Power Game 2 (CD)
(70) Activision – Simulation £29.99
Worth looking at if you don't have the hardware to run the latest sim.
Robinson's Requiem

Directory For Buyers

- 21st Century Entertainment 0235 851533
- Accolade 081 877 0880
- Alternative Software 0977 797777
- Bethesda Softworks 021 625 3388
- Brøderbund 0753 549442
- Codemasters 0926 814132
- Daze Marketing 071 328 2762
- Digital Integration 0276 684044
- Domark 081 780 2222
- Dynamix 0734 303322
- Electronic Arts 0753 549442
- Empire 081 343 7337
- Grandslam 081 680 7041
- Gremlin Graphics 0742 753423
- Hit Squad 061 832 6633
- Impressions 071 351 2133
- Infogrames 071 738 8199
- Interplay 0865 390029
- Kixx 021 606 1808
- Kompart (UK) Ltd 0727 868005
- Krisalis 0709 372290
- LucasArts 021 625 3388
- Maxis 071 490 2333
- Merit Software 091 385 7755
- Microids 071 328 2762
- MicroProse 0454 326532
- Millennium 0223 844894
- Mindscape 0444 246333
- Ocean 061 832 6633
- Origin 0753 549442
- Oxford Softworks 0993 823463
- Psygnosis 051 709 5755
- Renegade 071 481 9214
- Sierra On-Line 0734 303322
- Simarils 071 328 2762
- Spectrum Holobyte 0454 326532
- SSI 021 625 3388
- Three-Sixty Pacific 0753 549442
- Titus 071 700 2119
- Tsunami 081 877 0880
- US Gold 021 625 3388
- New World Computing 021 625 3388
- Virgin 081 960 9900
- Zeppelin Games 091 385 7755

TIE Fighter: Who wants to be noncey Luke Skywalker when you can be mates with big Darth?

(85: Recommended) Daze Marketing – Role-Playing Game £39.99
This is a highly original and addictive "survival sim", which, unfortunately, has some annoying bits.

Sam And Max Hit The Road
(93: Classic) US Gold – Adventure £45.99
Brilliantly original and a highly humorous jaunt.

Sim City Classic
(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £16.99
Still a great game but check out *Sim City 2000* first.

Sim City Enhanced
(82: Recommended) Interplay – Strategy £49.99
Sim City's an excellent game but 50 quid is a bit steep for a few enhancements.

Sleepwalker
(45) Hit Squad – Platform Game £9.99
Third-rate platformer. Stay well away from it.

Space Hulk
(87: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
Still a tremendous game, but not as good as the disk-based version.

Summer Challenge & Winter Challenge
(80: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
Good compilation, great value.

The Horde
(87: Recommended) US Gold – Strategy/Arcade £44.99
Not an original concept but extremely well implemented.

The Rock 'N' Roll Years – The '50s
(70) Supervision – General Interest £24.99
Handy for '50s music lovers or as a reference – but we doubt if it'll get you rockin' round the clock.

The Settlers
(89: Recommended) Blue Byte – Strategy £39.99
A damn fine, engrossing game.

Theatre Of War
(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £12.99
Excellent strategy game and it looks cool too.

UFO
(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Incredibly addictive strategy game.

Wembley Rugby League
(66) Audiogenic – Sport £29.99
This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.

Wolfpack
(60) Optima – Strategy £29.99
Disappointingly average.

World Cup Challenge
(48) Winsport – Sport £29.95
Disappointing, absurdly RAM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

Issue 17 – August 1994

1942: Pacific Air War
(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Two great games – *Carrier Battles* and *Task Force 1942* – in one package. It's a winner!

Al Quadim: The Genie's Curse
(40) US Gold/SSI – Role-Playing Game £35.99
The thinking amoeba's beat 'em up.

Burntime
(43) Max Design – Strategy £39.99
Hey, it's just like being there.

Cool Spot
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Platform Game £29.99
Charm and accessibility save it from being strictly seventies-up!

Delta V
(64) Bethesda Softworks – Shoot 'Em Up £45.99
Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.

Dinosaur Detective Agency
(42) Alternative Software – Platform Game £16.99
Cheap – but that's no reason to be cheerful.

Empire Soccer
(57) Empire – Sport £29.99
Let down by the small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.

Good To Firm
(50) New Era Software – Sport £29.99
Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.

International Tennis Open
(88: Recommended) Philips Interactive Media – Sport £44.99
Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.

Jack Nicklaus (CD)
(78) Accolade – Sport £16.99
A perfectly seviceable golf game with a good course editor tacked on.

Newsweek 3 Globocop (CD)
(0) Mindscape – General Interest £39.99
The most expensive beer mat in the world.

Overlord
(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Simulation £39.99
An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.

Pinball Dreams 2
(70) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £19.99
Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye
(88: Recommended) Activision – Puzzle Game £29.99
Puzzles galore in this excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games currently available for Windows.

Sherlock Holmes – The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel
(48) Electronic Arts – Adventure £49.99
Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.

Simon The Sorcerer (CD)
(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £44.99
A tricky adventure jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.

Syndicate (CD)
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
What a game. What a barg.

Tactical Manager
(75) Black Legend – Sport £34.99
An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.

Theme Park
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
A highly inventive "business" sim that's fun, fun, fun all the way. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog.

Walls Of Rome
(74) Digital Integration – Strategy £16.99
Good, if thin, fun.

World Cup USA '94
(78) US Gold – Sport £32.99
Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.

Zool 2
(82: Recommended) Millennium – Platform £34.99
As they say, if you liked *Zool*, you'll love this.

Issue 18 – September 1994

Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)
(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99
Comic book-style adventure with an excellently funny dialogue but lacking any real depth.

D-Day
(40) Impressions – War Game £39.99
A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a war game without many redeeming features.

FIFA International Soccer
(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99
Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.

Harpoon II
(70) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always slooooow.

Inherit The Earth – Quest For The Orb
(72) US Gold – Adventure £39.99
A well-thought out gentle little brainteaser for those who fancy a "sensible" game.

International Sensible Soccer
(78) Renegade – Sport £19.99
One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.

Litil Divil (CD)
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics – Adventure £34.99
Excellent, original and addictive.

Metal And Lace: The Battle Of The Robo Babes
(35) Megatech – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.

On The Ball
(68) Ascon – Sport £34.99
Too many frills, not enough body.

Outpost
(84: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy £49.99
A superb game. Addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.

Shadow Of The Comet (CD)
(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £39.99
A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.

Soccer Kid
(30) Krisalis – Platform Game £29.99
If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.

Theatre Of Death
(35) Psygnosis – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Below average imitation of an above-average game.

TIE Fighter
(94: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Space Sim £49.99
Sheer, undiluted quality. Treat yourself to a copy.

Issue 19 – October 1994

74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!
(90: Classic) SSI – Wargame £39.99
Never mind the 50-ton tanks – this is 50-tons of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.

Battle Bugs
(65) Dynamix – Strategy £TBA
A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).

Dark Legions
(85: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99
Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.

Heimdall 2
(45) Core – Adventure £39.99
Great game, shame you can't play it.

Hell Cab
(50) Time Warner – Adventure £49.99
It's the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.

IndyCar Racing Expansion Pack
(94: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £17.99
These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).

Ishar III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity
(50) Simarils – Strategy £39.99
Sum up *Ishar III* in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.

KGB
(65) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Bargain? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.

Kick Off 3
(55) Anco – Sport £29.99
Nice features, but gameplay not up to much.

Manchester United Premier League Champions
(60) Krisalis – Sport £29.99
Sensi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.

Planet Football
(68) Infogrames – Sport £39.99
The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases. This is not one of the best.

Police Quest IV – Open Season
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99
Atmospheric and very entertaining. A bit of a let down at the end, though.

Summer Challenge
(73) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Not a bad game by sports sim standards and easy to cheat at, but do you really want another sport sim?

Under A Killing Moon
US Gold – Adventure £59.99
Pigs can fly. Interactive movies do exist. Sort of.

Wing Commander: Armada
(76) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99
Lots of good ideas stuck together but it doesn't hang quite right.

Issue 20 – November 1994

Alien Legacy
(80: Recommended) Sierra – Strategy £39.99
Space strategy thing which is a bit like *Outpost* without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but ultimately very rewarding.

Chaos Engine
(80: Recommended) Renegade – Arcade £32.99
A damned good, multi-direction scrolling, shooty thing with lots of big guns and silly characters.

Colonization
(90: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Try to imagine *Civilization* with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined *Colonization*.

Cyclemania (CD)
(83: Recommended) Accolade – Arcade £39.99
Extremely competent *Road Rash* 3DO rip-off with lovely digitised backdrops and big motorbikes.

Desert Strike
(78) Gremlin - Arcade £34.99
Conversion of the Mega Drive classic, isometric helicopter, blast 'em up game. The graphics are a bit crap but it's immensely playable.

Doom II
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive – Arcade £49.99
The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and new monsty-wonsties. Miss it at your peril.

Inferno (CD)
(88: Recommended) Ocean – Space/Sim £44.99
Eagerly awaited game from DID. Lots of big space ships and silly looking aliens. One of the better space combat games.

KA-50 Hokum
(85: Recommended) Virgin – Simulation £39.99
Without a doubt the very best helicopter simulator money can buy. Something for the propeller heads out there.

NHL Hockey 95 (CD)
(91: Classic) EA – Sports/Arcade £34.99
A new version of the top-down scrolly, ice hockey game from EA. Basically the same as the original (reviewed issue seven) but with new stats.

PGA 486 (CD)
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sports £44.99
Gorgeous looking, solid playing, tasty little golf game. One of the best on the PC so far.

Pinball Dreams CD
(70) 21st Century – Arcade £39.99
Eight wonderfully designed, smoothly scrolling pinball tables. Why is it on CD? 'Cause there are lots of pointless rendered bits, that's why.

System Shock
(95: Classic) EA/Origin – RPG £44.99
Pant-wettingly fantastic, cyberpunk, RPG thing. All hail *System Shock*, that shalt be king hereafter (until *System Shock II* comes out, that is).

Theme Park: Sim City eat your heart out.

Issue 21 – December 1994

Alone in the Dark II CD
(93: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
A sequel that is noticeably better than the original and with some serious CD enhancements. What a refreshing change.

Dawn Patrol
(80: Recommended) Empire – Flight simulation £44.99
A gorgeous looking SVGA WWI flight sim with a bit of a different idea behind it... it's an interactive book apparently.

Dreamweb
(74) Empire – RPG £44.99
Cyberpunk RPG with lots of violence and a shagging scene that has now become infamous.

Ecstatica
(93: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99
An utterly brilliant *Alone in the Dark*-alike with ellipsoid-generated characters and lots of pert buttocks.

FIFA CD
(76) Electronic Arts – Sports £39.99
A smart-looking footie game that just falls short of being an absolute belter.

Little Big Adventure
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
A truly amazing adventure with pretty graphics and weird French gameplay. Gobsmacking.

Magic Carpet
(96: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'em-up £44.99
Possibly the most fab and groovy looking game ever... Addictive and infectious.

Project X
(76) Team 17 – Shoot 'em-up £19.99
A competent and nicely low-priced little shoot 'em-up.

Rise of the Robots
(88: Recommended) Mirage – Beat 'em-up £44.99
Possibly the best beat 'em-up on the PC so far with some excellent rendered sprites.

Space Simulator
(75) Microsoft – Simulator £39.99
A huge simulation of man's quest for space that is a little too ambitious for its own good.

Star Crusader
(60) Gametek – Shoot 'em-up £39.99
Basically this is a poor man's *Wing Commander* with some nice CD bits.

Transport Tycoon
(94: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
One of the best strategy games around and a more than worthy sequel to *Railroad Tycoon*.

Total Carnage
(74) ICE – Shoot 'em-up £27.99
Good, challenging fun and a more than competent conversion of the original arcade machine.

Go on

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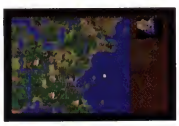
Day of the Tentacle  Colonization

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HD Charts

	Game	RRP	Comment
1.	Theme Park	£44.99	Possibly the best resource management game around
2.	TIE Fighter	£49.99	Play an Imperial pilot in the best space game ever
3.	Colonization	£44.99	The sequel to *Civilization*... and considerably better
4.	Space Simulator	£39.99	Fly the Shuttle or even land on the moon
5.	Armored Fist	£39.99	Extremely flash graphics and lots of powerful tanks
6.	Transport Tycoon	£44.99	Planes, trains and automobiles
7.	LucasArts x3	£49.99	*X-Wing*, *Imperial Pursuit* and *B-Wing* in special package
8.	Rise of the Robots (SVGA)	£45.99	The best beat'-em-up on the PC so far
9.	Dawn Patrol	£44.99	WWI combat in this beautiful flight sim from Empire
10.	TFX	£44.99	The ultimate jet fighter combat game from Ocean/DID

CD Charts

	Game	RRP	Comment
1.	Theme Park	£44.99	Bullfrog's classic with added flashy bits
2.	Rebel Assault	£49.99	The biggest selling CD game ever... *Star Wars* goes FMV
3.	Armored Fist	£44.99	Big tanks and decidedly posh graphics
4.	LucasArts x2	£44.99	*Day of the Tentacle* and *The Fate of Atlantis* on one disc
5.	Quarantine	£39.99	*Doom* on wheels
6.	FIFA Soccer	£39.99	Including a full commentary from Tony Gubba
7.	Dawn Patrol	£44.99	WWI combat now with added war songs
8.	Interplay 10 Year Anthology	£45.99	Ten games on one disc. Great value!
9.	TFX	£49.99	Fly for NATO in the best futuristic combat game around
10.	Battle Isle 2	£49.99	One of the best strategy games ever produced. A classic

Rise of the Robots

iption

X-Wing

Armored Fist

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Bits & PCs

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Floppy drives that don't go, CD-ROM drives without SCSI, Icelandic SoundBlaster probs, clapped out PCs and clapped out MS-DOS. Mark Burgess furrows his weary brows and comes up with a few ideas.

Slave drivers

I'M INTERESTED IN this Bluepoint IDE CD-ROM Drive.

Firstly, do they have any plans for triple-speed drives, because I don't want to get stuck with an out of date thingy (witness one computer struggling badly with new games).

Secondly, I was looking at my computer manual and it started wittering about masters and slaves...?

Thirdly, I have a 2.5MB hardware cache on my HDD controller. Will the IDE CD-ROM Drive get the full benefit of this, or will I still need other caching programs? I don't run *SMARTDRIVE*, and the HDD controller is really fast compared with others I have seen, plus I get more memory (obviously) and this bonus is not something I want to get rid of.

Rupert Smith, Cheltenham

PS Where's UNP as promised by the hackmasters?

Bluepoint have plans for triple-speed drives, but don't have any dates. Incidentally, Bluepoint isn't the only firm to make an IDE CD-ROM Drive. There is a new one out from Wearnes, the CDD-120, which has got a lot of good reviews. I know of two reviewers who have gone out and bought one – this is the ultimate accolade.

Master and slaves are the somewhat dramatic terms used by IDE controllers. The Master will be the main drive, usually the one you boot from. The slave drive is the other one – IDE only supports two hard disks as opposed to the eight devices supported by a SCSI interface.

You have a large amount of memory on your IDE controller and the CD-ROM Drive will be able to use it. The best thing to do is to see whether the CD-ROM Drive runs fast enough using the hardware cache. If not, then caching software is cheap.

PS UNP finally emerged on the cover CD of iss 19. **MB**

Slow starter

I OWN A DELL 486-25 SX with the obligatory 4MB RAM. My system does not have a VESA local bus.

My problem is, when I change to the A: drive (3.5" HD), or try to access that drive, it can take ten seconds or more for the system just to acknowledge that the drive exists. Changing to the C: drive and back to the A: drive is no problem. Everything else works quickly. My old 386 – 16 MHZ's access to the A: drive was virtually instantaneous, so what's the delay? Is there any way of optimising the software or updating the controller (without spending a fortune) to make disk access faster than a tea break?

I look forward to hearing from you.

J A Scott, North Shields, Tyne and Wear

Something is seriously wrong here (you'll be surprised to learn). The fault is certainly with your controller and it sounds like a loose connection. Take a look at the floppy controller and make sure that all the leads and plugs are securely home. If it's still under guarantee, get Dell to fix it, otherwise you'll need to but a new one. **MB**

SoundBlaster saga

I'M HAVING PROBLEMS with my "Screen Thief". I can't get It to work when I'm playing *Doom* and Neograb doesn't work either. The same sentence comes after the game has loaded the sound – "DOS/4GW Professional error (2001): exception ODH (general protection fault) at 80:000006D5," – and 12 other lines following this one. At that time I have to restart the computer. What the hell does that mean? Please help me with my problem, I gotta have some juicy snaps from *Doom* when I'm entering *Windows* (and for other purposes, of course).

There's something wrong with my SoundBlaster 16. When I run "Testsb16" and check the right speaker, nothing happens, but when I check the left speaker I can hear from both speakers. Hmm, what's wrong?

And another thing can you take a look at my AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS file and check if there is anything wrong or if I could do better.

About the CD cover disc, you guys could do a lot better by having some sound files, or snaps from games or few rendered pictures. Or a special <MR CURSOR> directory with sound files made by Mr Cursor, and couldn't you have a better caddie for the discs.

Sigurður A.Gudmundsson, Akureyri, Iceland

PS What is this Akira CD? Is it Manga's Akira?

Goðan dag, Sigurður. Forget about Screen Thief. *Start* Doom *by typing:*

doom – devparm.

That puts you into developer's mode. Pressing F1 at any time will capture the screen as a glowing, 256-colour PCX. The developer's mode has many other goodies;

–devparm –record <filename>.lmp

will record your Doom *session as a demo, and*

–devparm –playdemo <filename>.lmp

will play it back.

You can also change skill levels, and things like the rate of drawing to the screen.

Onto the SoundBlaster problem. Do you get stereo effects when you play games? Is it only the test program that causes problems? Some early versions of the SoundBlaster test program ran into problems with 486 – 50 machines, and there is an update available. Otherwise, either your speakers aren't wired correctly or else there is something wrong with the socket.

Go into the SoundBlaster Mixer program in Windows *and use the balance slider to test the channels. If you don't hear the sound move from channel to channel, then test the socket by plugging in a pair of Walkman-style headphones to the speaker socket and try Mixer again. If you get a stereo effect, then the speakers aren't connected properly. If, after checking the connections, you still don't get stereo, then there's a problem with the socket. If you get really stuck call Creative Labs. on (UK) 0734 344 744.*

Your AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files look okay. Just a couple of suggestions. In your AUTOEXEC.BAT file, rem out C:\DOS\SMARTDRV.EXE and re-instate the line:

LH /L: 0; 1,42384 /S C:\WINDOWS\SMARTDRV.EXE

after making sure that the Windows *directory has the latest version of Smartdrive.*

In the CONFIG.SYS file put the line DEVICE=HIMEM.SYS first and follow it with all the others. DEVICE=SETVER.EXE can be changed to DEVICEHIGH=SETVER.EXE and omitted altogether for most applications.

We try to make the cover disk as varied as possible. If there's enough demand for a digitised sample of Mr Cursor *saying "I know this looks suspicious officer", we'll do it.*

I haven't heard of the CD you mention, but it sounds like a Manga thing. **MB**

Sad Old Case

I HAVE AN IBM XT with a colour monitor and a 5.25" floppy disk drive. I would like to upgrade this to at least a 386 by replacing the necessary components as well as fitting a 3.5" floppy drive. Would you please advise me which components would need to be changed, together with the estimated cost.

Sean Flynn, Old Buckenham, Norfolk

You'll need to replace everything apart from the keyboard and the case. In fact, you'll probably have to replace the case as well because the XT wasn't designed for a hard drive. Buying the components separately and building a computer from scratch may be educational, but it's going to be time consuming, difficult (unless you know what you're doing) and expensive. There are many computer manufacturers about and most work in the same way. They buy components in bulk and as cheaply as they can. The whole lot is put together by Taiwanese on 50p a week and then the computer is sent back to the UK (or wherever) to have a sticky label put on the front of the case. You won't be able to buy the bits you need as cheaply as the manufacturers can – it will be cheaper (as well as easier) to buy a new computer. They're quite affordable these days. Scan the ads in mags like Computer Shopper *or* PCPro *and see what's about.* **MB**

Antique DOS

IN FEBRUARY, my parents decided to invest in a PC. We were advised, by a friend who works closely with PCs, that we buy something suitable for what we wanted to use it for – mainly word processing. We bought an Amstrad PC 4386-SX and a Hewlett Packard deskjet 520 printer. Unfortunately, the

software we were given with the computer was by no means brand new. We have DOS v. 3.3 and *Windows v. 3.0*. My main problem with this software is that, using DOS v. 3.3, it's difficult to get enough memory to run today's games (e.g. *Sensible Soccer* to name but one). We are soon, however, upgrading to DOS v. 6.2 and I'm in no doubt that I'll be able to free enough memory. I'm soon replacing the AdLib sound card we received with the computer to a SoundBlaster v.2 to go with the game I am going to buy: *Doom*. I would therefore like to know of any ways of freeing lots of memory with DOS 3.3 until we replace it with DOS v. 6.2. My AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS are as follows:

AUTOEXEC.BAT

```
@echo off
prompt $p$g
path c:\dos;c:\windows;c:\
set temp=c:\windows\temp
set amstrad
keyb uk,, c:\dos\keyboard.sys
rem path=%path%:c:\cp      [cp is a menu system (now deleted)]
rem cp
win
```

CONFIG.SYS

```
files=30
buffers=30
shell=c:\command.com /p /e:512
country=044,,c:\dos\country.sys
device=himem.sys
device=c:\windows\smartdrv.sys 2048 512
device=c:\dos\mouse
```

Being a newcomer to PCs, I have recently been buying your magazine, starting at issue 15. I was rather interested to see, in the *Off the Boards* section of issue 16 a rather amusing add-on to *Doom* called *PacDoom*. How do I get hold of a version of this? Could you fill me in on how to order this item?

Anyway, I am sorry to have written such a long letter, but unfortunately, until we purchase DOS v. 6.2, hardly anything will run on my computer. It often cheeses me off, because my friend has a Philips 286 with DOS v. 6.2 and he can run *Formula One World Championship*, which needs over 600K of base memory to run. (Git!)

By the way, is *Indycar Racing* better or worse than *Formula One World Championship* in your opinion? What kind of spec does it need to run?

Luke Allinson, Kenilworth

Well, the bad news is that your version of MS-DOS dates from 1984. In computing terms that's like the last Ice Age. The 386 was four years into the future. I sure hope you didn't pay any money for it. Likewise, Windows 3.0 *was a horror – bloated and bug ridden like the carcass of a syphilitic elephant.*

The chip inside your computer is a 80386SX. To use the features of the 386 chip – in particular its memory management and addressing – you need DOS v. 5.0 or above.

Until you upgrade your version of DOS you're not going to be able to free up the higher memory areas. You are already doing all you can by making use of virtual memory (that is, using part of the hard drive as if it were memory – that's what SMARTDRIVE *is doing).*

When you start looking at games, you find that very few will work on a 386 machine. Doom *can just about struggle on my 386DX, but it's not a pretty sight. The* PacDoom *program you mention is on most bulletin boards, so most shareware libraries should have it. Ask if they do a* Doom *add-on disk and whether it contains this program. Incidentally,* Doom *won't run at all on the 286 of your clever friend.*

Indycar Racing *is better than* Formula One World Championship *in my opinion and, as far as I am aware, just about everyone else's, too. The trouble is, however, that it needs a fast 486 to run.*

Before you buy any game check out the specifications on the box. There's a "minimum" spec, which is usually a joke, and the "recommended" specs – these are what the game needs to run at any kind of decent speed. I'm afraid you'll find them depressing reading. MB

It's that game again

I AM HAVING TROUBLE with the *Doom* hacks in issue 19. You say that in *Debug* you should have a ">" prompt. I have a "-" prompt. In the demonstration hack, the address is four digits long but the *Doom* hacks are five digits long. When I copied the first hack I knocked off the last digit. When I tried to write it back, the computer replied "EXE and HEX files cannot be written". I tried to back up the file and then tried to hack the back up. When I tried to load it into memory it just replied "insufficient memory". It still worked with the EXE file, though.

My PC is a 486 with 655,360 bytes conventional memory with every byte available to DOS, 3,129,334 bytes free EMS, 32,768 bytes free XMS and 3,407,872 bytes contiguous extended memory of which none is available. DOS is loaded high. Please help

Daniel Porosa

When you enter Debug *you get the* Debug *prompt which is "-". I've been asking why it isn't printed as such in the mag since issue 1. Entries for* Debug *will always be even numbers. But the* Doom *hacks in issue 19 weren't* Debug *hacks. They were for sector editors such as PC Tools or Xtree Gold – as it said in the intro. You scroll through the backed-up file with your sector editor until you come to a certain address – say, &85BCC – then look for a certain value – say 01 – and replace it as suggested – 05. Then you can enjoy all the benefits of the cheat.* MB

What is it with... Graphics Cards?

The bit of *Bits & PCs* that covers everything you wanted to know but never got round to asking

A couple of years ago video accelerators were only used for high-powered graphics programs running in DOS and for heavy *Windows* users. (And, after all, what is *Windows* but a DOS graphics application?) But then manufacturers started to exploit new chipsets from firms like S3, which by-passed the standard BIOS routines and helped programs write to the screen more quickly. These days most computers will come with a graphics card and this is supposed to be a great improvement on the old VGA boards.

The VGA boards were themselves a great improvement on what had gone before. Early display adapters – MDA, Hercules, CGA and EGA – sent their signals to the monitor in digital form. The blue, red, green and highlight attributes of a pixel were either on or off. Along came VGA with its analogue signal which meant that the blue (or red, or green or highlight) content of the pixel could be a quarter on, or a half, or any other fraction.

These days VGA is reckoned to be the minimum. Resolution is 640 x 480 pixels in 16 colours. SVGA is the maximum for a 14" monitor and will give you 800 x 600 with 16 colours. The number of colours is tied to the amount of memory you have. The standard amount of memory for a graphics card is 1Mb, which will give you 256 colours at 1,024 x 768 (or 800 x 600 in 32,000 colours or 60 x 480 in 16.7 million colours).

Manufacturers like to talk about Hi-Colour and True-Colour modes. Hi Colour is 32,000 colours (2^{15}) and True Colour is the magic 16.7 million colours (2^{24}). All very exciting. But the question to be asked with any new gizmo for your PC is: do I really need it? Of course not, no one needs any of it really. 16.7 million colours sounds impressive but unless you're designing full-colour pages for print, its 32 times what you really can use. Even Photo CD applications skip along happily at 64,000 colours, maximum. Most *Windows* users get a speed benefit from their graphics card rather than a lot of lovely colours. After all, what's the point of a 256-colour spreadsheet?

Number of colours is sometimes shown as a number bits for a specific resolution. Here's a little table:

Bits	Colours
4	16
8	256
15	32,768
16	65,536
24	16,777,216

It's generally accepted that the human eye can't distinguish more than 16.7m colours, so things will remain this way until human evolution catches up with graphic cards. By the way, don't confuse bits (as in colour) with bits (as in bus width). A good graphics card will accept data in 32-bit chunks and be called a 32-bit card.

So all you do then is just take your old VGA card out and plug one of these gizmos in? Not exactly. Like any other card it will need *drivers*. *Windows* has given up offering drivers for all the cards around and their various chipsets, so you'll have to install your own from the OEM disk. The theory is that these are tailored to make your model of graphics card work like greased lightning. There will be a program that installs video drivers at a plethora of resolutions in a difficult to find directory somewhere on your hard disk. Once installed, these drivers should interrupt graphic calls and do horrible things with your WIN.INI file. The version number of the drivers is important. Be suspicious of any labelled 0.99b.

Bugged or inefficient drivers aren't the only things to worry about. Remember when I said earlier that a graphics card will by-pass standard BIOS routines with its own BIOS? Well some BIOS don't like that. A well-known graphics card will just not work with a Phoenix BIOS. Of course, many cards now come with the BIOS on a flash ROM, so it can be re-programmed if any compatibility problems show up. But it is always worth specifying the sort of BIOS you expect the card to work with.

What about performance? There is very little in it. No matter what it says on the box, the chipsets for most cards come from few manufacturers and they have stood the test of time. Look for names like Tseng, Weitek, S3, ATI, IIT and Cirrus Logic. Makers to look for include SPEA, Diamond, and Matrox.

WORD processor

SEND YOUR POST TO: *WORDPROCESSOR, PC ZONE,* 19 BOLSOVER ST. LONDON W1P 7HJ

Offensive and abusive? Us? Surely not. We're friendly and cuddly here... and we don't know any naughty words at all.

NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCKS...

DEAR PC ZONE

As a subscriber to your previously excellent magazine since issue one, I have never before felt compelled to write and criticise until now.

My criticism is directed at the *WordProcessor* section of the magazine and the foul language contained therein. From the nine letters printed, I counted at least four which contained abusive and foul language, which is, in my opinion, totally unnecessary. It only succeeds in lowering the tone of a once excellent magazine.

I am not a prude, and I don't belong to any do-gooders society, however, I do object to opening a magazine, which I read from cover to cover, and find such language. If this is your new editorial way of making a name for yourself I suggest that you re-think your strategy before I and many other readers cease to purchase *PC Zone*.

I suspect that as the editor controls the letters page, this won't get printed, but I think that something needs to be said.

John Justice, Tipton, W Midlands

Oh.

...AND AGAIN

DEAR PC ZONE

I feel that I really must object to the gratuitous use of foul language in the December issue of *PC Zone*. I felt that the use of the words "wanker" and "bollocks" (*whoops, we've printed them again... naughty us – Ed.*) were far from necessary. Surely you can't feel that this sort of language will attract readers? What about all of the younger children that read your magazine. Surely this sort of language would be shocking to them? If this sort of behaviour from you continues in future, I shall stop buying the magazine altogether.

Anonymous

I'm not even going to bother justifying anything to tell you the truth... Okay, it cropped up. It's not something that appears on every page, so it's hardly gratuitous is it?

OFFICE SLAVERY

DEAR PC ZONE

I am giving serious thought to a job on a PC games magazine. I am only 14 at the moment but I would like it if you could answer a couple of questions for me. What skills are required? After reviewing a game, does the person get to keep the game? How much does it pay? How do you get the screen shots? I am interested in any kind of job on a magazine.

Peter Horan, Cork, Ireland

Well, we could do with a young slave to make the coffee for us. It gets to be a bit of a bind having to get up off our arses every hour or so to boil the kettle and get the milk out of the fridge. It's also a pain when we get the munchies and someone has to go to the shops to buy some biccies or something. What would be best, though, is when we're near deadline and can't get down to the pub... we need someone to go to the off-licence. Oh... hang on, we'd have to dress you up in some kind of disguise, though. Maybe a false moustache or something. Still, if you're a strapping young lad, the chaps in the off-licence will sell you our usual extra-strong-dead-hard-journo booze.

FOREIGN AFFAIR

DEAR PC ZONE

I am an overseas subscriber to *PC Zone* and I find your mag very interesting... it is the best that I have ever seen. Unfortunately I am disappointed with the letters page. I feel that all subscribers, no matter where they live, should have an equal say in the magazine nearly all of your letters come from – the UK. Why not have a corner of the page reserved for overseas readers? That's all I have to say... I hope you will consider it and keep improving the magazine in future.

Blondie Tsui, Mauritius

Yes, it would be great... and you'd probably get in it if you had anything interesting to say – but it seems that you don't. Thanks.

ANOTHER WEIRD FOREIGNER

DEAR PC ZONE

I've noticed that there are several overseas readers who have contributed to your page over the past months, however, I have noticed that there haven't been any letters from Maltese *PC Zone* readers. Is the policy of the magazine not to publish letters from Maltese readers? Or are Maltese persons dull or lazy writers?

Chris Attard, Malta

What? See... two letters from overseas. The international corner of the letters page has already begun.

CD OR NOT CD?

DEAR PC ZONE

How can you be so merciless? Like the hundreds, nay, thousands of us who have bravely fought our way through the toughest level of *Doom*, I have been on bended knee at the foot of the alter praying to the iD god of games for a swift follow up.

I am totally addicted to *Doom* and have been playing it every other week since I purchased it in December 1993 (only breaking to play my latest *PC Zone* cover disk). So when a cover disk was published with loads of new levels, the wife threatened to leave home (I carried her bags to the taxi).

But wait... face red with anger... fists clenched and looking more like the demons from *Doom*... I HAVEN'T GOT A BLOODY CD DRIVE! It would seem that the *PC Zone* god offers these temptations to force me into spending more than £100 on top of all the other hundreds of pounds I've already spent on kit. WHY?

After a month of counselling at the *Doom* therapy clinic, I have now rejoined polite society.

Alan Boardman, Droylsden, Manchester

The Doom *levels have caused more of a stir than any other cover offer in history as far as I'm aware. After we gave away more than 500 of the damn things last month, along with the wicked* Doom II *editor and WAD converter, it seems that everyone who doesn't have a CD drive is now really pissed off. We're sorry... the only way we can possibly distribute all of the WADs en-masse is to bung them on our CD... it's the only medium that makes it feasible. Like it or not, there will come a time over the next six months where you will need a CD-ROM drive... end of story. If you want to play the newest games, many of the software houses will soon only publish on CD. They're cheaper to produce, more efficient and more convenient. When a drive costs less than £100 these days, can you really afford to ignore them?*

HOPELESSLY STUCK

DEAR ED.

A few weeks ago I was stuck on the MicroProse game, *Return of the Phantom*. After struggling vainly in the sewers-maze for ages I tried your Trueplayer help line and I was rewarded with a helpful chap called Miles who found something for me called the Universal Hint System. It was brilliant! It helped me out without spoiling the game and as a result I have continued to enjoy the game. I believe there are many of these sort of things out in BBS land, but unfortunately, I don't have access to them as I don't have a modem. Any chance you could put a selection of files on future cover disks to supplement your tips section in the magazine?

Dennis Ellis, Weston Super Mare, Avon

It's certainly something worth considering... Our young Miles Tudor swears by the things when he's doing the Trueplayer line.

GRAND PRIX 2?

DEAR PC ZONE

What's happened to *Formula One Grand Prix 2*?

Way back in January I bought a copy of *PC Gamer* (*Right, that's it... send the lads round to his house and do him – Ed.*) and while browsing through I noticed a mentioning of said game... it was a brief item but it said that it should be out in the summer. Well, it's now October and I haven't seen anything about it anywhere. Do you have any information about it? I love racing games – especially *F1GP* and *Indycar*, and I really can't wait for *GP2*.

Justin Caldwell, Linton, Cambridge

As far as we know good ol' Geoff Crammond is still beavering away at F1GP2 and it is more than likely that it will surface at some point in the first quarter of 1995. As you can imagine it's going to be an impressive game and we're assured that it will feature fully texture-mapped polygon graphics and will support SVGA modes as well as standard VGA. Chances are you'll need a monster PC to run the thing... but that's hardly anything unusual these days, is it?

Hopefully we'll be able to bring you some screen shots of it soon.

GRATUITOUS STUPIDITY

DEAR SIR/MADAM

I have a greenhouse.

Yours hopefully,

Ewan Loughlin, Scotland

PS My compliments to the chef.

Fine, okay... If anyone would care to write to write to dearest Ewan, we have his address. Enlightening chap isn't he?

DOOM II DISAPPOINTMENT

DEAR JOHN OR WHOEVER READS THIS IN THE OFFICE,

Can I just say "well done" to your magazine.

Over the past six months it has matured and developed enough to make me want to buy it regularly. On top of which, you have done some excellent cover CD-ROMS – especially if, like me, you live for *Doom*.

I must also offer you some support in terms of your criticism of *Doom II*. It is very good and, yes, it's certainly better than the original *Doom*, but it hasn't met the hype. Ho hum, I suppose we will all have to wait until *Dark Forces* is released.

One other comment – in the *Off the Boards* article, could you please actually put the short forum name so I know where to GO. (Grin!)

Jonathan Fielder-White, 100422,1070

Thank God, someone actually agrees with our Doom II *spiel. It's really nothing new is it? And it's really expensive as well which makes it even worse.*

As far as your comments about Off the Boards, *I think you will find that we now list where to GO at the bottom of the page (and we have been doing so since last month, so there).*

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Interactive PC Zone

I cannot congratulate you on an excellent magazine because it's been said many times before. However, it's GREAT! The discs are good in both formats, although I do have difficulty in finding the CD versions in shops – even major stores. I am sure that this is not because they become sold very quickly, but more of not being ordered in the first place, or only in small numbers.

I purchase a mixture of both formats from major publishers. This, apart from being expensive, ensures that I have enough demos to decide which product I intend to buy.

The main reason for buying demos nowadays seems to be the FREE games disc. Most people are happy to continue to play the demo. I always register or purchase full copies.

I also think that having more demos/trials on CD would benefit the software houses because people like myself would have access to it and it should result in an increase in the products sales.

Finally, I wondered whether you would consider putting your excellent magazine totally on CD. It could be placed on the same disc as the demos. "Turning the pages" to the cover disc directory would have icons to click to run/install the demo. To do this to all your CD versions could save 50 per cent of the magazine paper you use. Think about this as a green mag. But also, imagine that readers like just myself would not have to sift through piles of magazines to find an article; you could simply place the CD into the drive and click on the menu. Couldn't be simpler. Imagine, for CD users everywhere, no mags lying about the toilet floor. Mags get into bad condition and then get chucked. Discs would be kept, and in good condition too. Worth thinking about?

Michael Walker, 100435,1611

Do you not think that part of the fun of having a magazine is actually being able to hold the thing and turn the pages yourself? Surely it's a tactile thing as much as an information source... You can't take a PC to the bog with you can you? You can't haul your PC along with you when you sit on a train. Yes, the idea of an "interactive" PC Zone *is a good one – our sister publication* CD-ROM Magazine *already features an "interactive" disc on the front which is growing in terms of content every month. However, I can't see the discs taking over until we get little, portable, book-sized thingies that you can stuff the disc into and then use anywhere.*

SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM

PC ZONE

I loved *UnderWorld* (*UW*), was disappointed with *UnderWorld 2* (*UW2*) and have been eagerly awaiting *System Shock* (*SS*).

I'm disappointed to hear that interaction with other characters doesn't exist in *SS*. This was a major strength of *UW* and greatly contributed to what made it such a fantastic game. While I'll reserve final judgement until I actually play *SS*, it does sound that not having character interaction is a step backward.

Puzzles don't interest me at all (I found *7th Guest* to be a complete waste). It sounds like *SS* has more puzzles than *UW/UW2*, but that they're childishly simple. Is that an accurate description?

One thing I haven't been able to gather from this thread is the linear playability of the game. The big thing about *UW* was its complete non-linear, free-wheeling play, going wherever you wanted, rejecting quests, returning to them later if desired, etc. *UW2* was much more linear and suffered for it. Apparently *SS* has quests. Must you finish each quest in order before continuing?

I'm interested in hearing your and other *SS* player's experiences in this area.

Steven Calwas, 73507,2272

To quote virtually everyone in the office, System Shock *is "the bollocks", and is without a doubt the best sci-fi RPG we have EVER come across. The lack of character interaction is a little unusual, but the whole idea behind the game is that you are alone and fighting against an oppressive technology. As far as the quest system goes, the game features many peripheral quests which can be completed alongside the overall mission, however, things can be done in any order... you simply need to be focused on destroying Shodan.*

If anyone has any comments about System Shock *we'd be glad to hear them.*

DOOM II The final word

Dear PC ZONE,

I know you're probably bored of hearing about it, but I thought I'd just have to comment on this *Doom II* lark that everyone seems to be obsessed with. I'm new to PCs and as a result I'd never played *Doom*. When the sequel came out I thought "I'll buy it". Okay, it seemed a bit costy, but it is wonderful. I'm now totally obsessed with the thing. Was the original as addictive? Have I missed out on some kind of phenomenon? Where can I get the original game and is it worth buying.

Tony Bestwick, W. Yorkshire

You are a unique person. We weren't aware that people like you existed! Do you live in some hut in the middle of the dales with no form of contact with the outside world?

To answer your questions: yes, the original was just as good (some argue that it's better) and you should be able to buy the full version (as opposed to the shareware game) in most high street games stores. Somewhere like Future Zone should have it on sale, and it's a lot cheaper than Doom II. *The two games are very similar, and now that a number of editors and levels are available for building onto* Doom II, *I wouldn't bother buying it.*

Mr Cursor

HE'S BEEN NET SURFING...

I'VE DONE IT. I've finally put my credibility on hold, logged on to CompuServe, and surfed around. Is that the right term? Surfed around? Actually I don't give a toss whether it's the right term or not, to be honest. In fact, I hope I've got it wrong, because, frankly, what I've seen in the net scares me shitless, and I don't want to look as if I'm in any way au fait. Know what I mean? No? I'll spell it out then. The whole place is full of saddos. There are exceptions, sure, but if I was to break it into percentages or whatever I'd be forced to conclude that the anorak quotient was somewhere around the 95% mark.

And forgive me if you've already been there, seen it, done it, because I'm about to explain exactly what's going on to the numerous folk who haven't.

Okay, we're talking like forums here: zillions and zillions of the things. They're electronic rooms, and each one is centred on a specialist subject. You name a subject, no matter how dull, and there'll be a forum for it. Once you're inside a particular forum there's a scrolling list of names to view – the other visitors currently on-line, who mostly tend to be American.

Time, I think, for a specific example, and what better than my first foray, where I logged on to (ahem) the HOBBIES directory? (Actually, let's call it the Hobbies Hotel to make it sound more friendly.) Right, so in the lobby of the Hobbies Hotel was a list telling me what was going on in each room within that particular establishment. And the list went on and on and on... As you can probably imagine, I became transfixed when I suddenly noticed that there was a Trainspotters' forum. That was that. Wild horses couldn't have dragged me away. A double click later and I was in. I entered my name as Keith M. Ogadon and studied the list of possible targets. "What on Earth are they up to?" I thought. After a spot of eeny meeny miny mo, I decided to send a message to Nathan L. Zimmerman, from Alabama. Here's the conversation, my opening gambit being a simple greeting followed by a question about the only train I know the name of.

Me: Hello Nathan. What do you think of EuroStar?

Incredibly long pause. He wasn't answering. I tried again.

Me: Hello, I'm Keith from London, England. Have you heard about EuroStar? What do you reckon? It's a pretty cool loco, isn't it.

Long pause.

Me: Hello? Hello? Are you there?

Nathan: I'm busy. Why do you want to talk to me?

Me: I want to talk about trains and I'm completely new to this on-line malarkey.

Nathan: It's rude to talk to people without an invite. I'm downloading stuff. Please leave me alone.

Me: Hello? Hello? Hello? Nathan? Hello?

An infinitely long pause followed, so I gave up. But what a tosser, eh? He was probably getting hold of some new train numbers or something. Undaunted, I decided to try another trainspotter. Mr P. Crabbe was his name, and he didn't like my opening gambit either...

Me: Hey, that's a strange name you got there big guy. What's the story?

Mr P. Crabbe: WHAT???

He used capitals because that's how you shout on-line.

Me: I said it's a strange name you got there, tough guy. What do you think of EuroStar?

Mr P. Crabbe: WHAT DO YOU MEAN STRANGE???

Me: It's kind of other worldly. EuroStar though, that's some train, huh?

Mr P. Crabbe: If you don't go away I'll report you to the SysOp.

Me: Er, catch ya later then.

And that's something you've always got to bear in mind if you're going fart about on-line: if you piss off a seriously sad wanker too much, he's going to grass you up to the System Operator, meaning you stand a chance of getting axed from the network, bigtime. So I logged out of the Trainspotter forum double quick and cruised about elsewhere. I changed my sexuality to female (i.e. altered my handle so I now came up as Katherine Snood), and waited. I'd let them come to me instead. And it didn't take more than 30 seconds before a message window appeared. The sender was Jason, from New Jersey.

Jason: Hey, Katherine, how's it going?

Katherine: Not bad, big guy. How's it hanging?

There was a short pause while Jason sharpened his rapier wit. And then he struck...

Jason: Like a horse...

And down and down it spiralled, with seedy Jason gradually getting extremely turned on, thinking he was on to a surefire babe "I want to rip your panties off with my teeth," he eventually proclaimed. This was where I told him that I was in fact a female journalist from the *National Enquirer*, that I was working on a piece called Sex Beasts Roam The Net, that I had his user ID, that I wanted to fly to New Jersey to interview him, and that I'd be bringing a photographer. I added that he'd be famous and might even end up on the *Arsenio Hall Show* or, at the very least, *Oprah* or *Donahue*. He immediately explained that he was only 13, that he was using his mum's computer, that he had never done anything like this before, and that he was very, very scared. He logged off, tail between his legs, as it were. Ho ho ho!

Katherine Snood then became Captain Death, invited 30 rando CompuServe users into a group discussion, and proceeded to try t pick a fight – a fight to the death, with knives, by the bandstand in New York's Central Park, on the 10 January 1995. But that's another story.

GAMERUNNER

NOTHING CAN STOP YOU NOW

THE STORY SO FAR

You are the Game Player. Malignant forces are attacking your computer. Your power to play has been stopped cold in its tracks...

...hard drive slow... enemies unbeatable... memory limited: cannot initiate game programs... error... abort... abort...

You need help! Await further instructions.

YOUR MISSION

Get the Gamerunner and regain control of your PC. QEMM, HyperDisk and AXIS The Gamecheater unleash your maximum gaming potential.

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...let the games begin

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